

# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH YOUR STUDENTS!

## **KNOW YOUR KIDS**

*The most important aspect of your position as a teacher is your relationship with the children. As you become familiar with the children in your class and build personal friendships with each one you will notice other benefits stem from bonding with your students... ~~greater classroom control~~, less disciplinary problems -(no need) -change discipline to discipleship, greater and deeper times of sharing and learning, MORE LOVE!-(John 13:34-35).*

*You can impress people at a distance, you can only Impact them up close. H.H.*

Helpful suggestions as to how you can build deeper, closer relationships with your children...

1.) **PRAY** for your children during the week! Make it a point to remember your children **by name** and pray for something specific concerning each individual child in your class. Keep a Prayer Journal or notecards, update them each week - show the kids where God answers - Yes, No, and Wait. You'll get to know the kids *Spiritually!* You'll soon come to know when your kids are struggling with their walk... **PRAY FOR THEM!** Are they having trouble at home or school? Are both his parents believers? However the Spirit leads, be in prayer for these young believers that God has entrusted to your care.

2.) **LEARN THEIR NAMES!** You cannot teach what you don't know! Make it a point to learn their names quickly, within the first couple of weeks. This will help you to know them so well, that "You don't seem yourself today... anything wrong?" would be a welcome question from you. It is impossible to meet their needs unless you know them.

- Engage them in conversation, using their names. \*
- Interview them. They need to know each other.
- Take a copy of the sign-in sheet home with you and go over it.
- Take an occasional field trip.

3.) **LEARN SOMETHING ABOUT EACH CHILD.** Listen to what they talk to you about or share with you. Get them talking. **SAY ANYTHING!\*** The sooner you get them talking the better. Their issues, their agenda, not just yours. Ask them about it next time you see them. The sooner they share their issues with you, the sooner you become their **TEACHER!** For "Teacher" to remember their issues from last week last week confirms your love for them.

3b) **BIGGER PICTURE.** "The Marbles" Story. Implies the need to "Earn the Hearing", or the "opportunity to be heard." "Pokemon Story." My message to them was, "Your thoughts/Joys/Hobbies are *IRREVERENT!* (Spiritual Cooties!) I belittled them, and as a consequence- My relevance - My Opinions - Anything I could possibly consider imparting to them became Obsolete/Irrelevant.

They rejected what I was teaching, because they rejected ME! Q: Who do you THINK you are?... **If someone told me** that I was unimportant to them, that any of my Joys, interests, accomplishments or beliefs were utter nonsense - then I would discount ANYTHING THEY HAD TO SAY! If the students have strong negative feelings toward the teacher, then he/she will never learn! The "Teacher" because of rudeness/inattention has been disqualified. So has the learner. **EARN THE RIGHT TO BE THEIR TEACHER!** To be their teacher you must generate their confidence in YOU!

*"The thing Walt knew is that he, 'Knew that which he would teach.'" Howard Hendricks*

-Knowing your bible and study materials is secondary to this, because if you don't "Win a hearing" then you can say anything at all, or even become a clanging cymbal! They won't hear.

*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 1 Corinthians 13:1-2*

4.) **SHARE SOMETHING ABOUT YOURSELF WITH THEM!** To know your students is to flow into their lives. Let the children know what's going on in your life. You got a new job, you've been feeling a little sick, your going to the beach next Monday. Just share your life with them. During prayer requests share your spiritual life! Teaching is a two way street. Let them know who you are. Become vulnerable. Let them know your struggles too. -Befriend them!

*They don't care what you know till they know that you care!*

5.) **LOVE THEM!** Show them affection! With the younger ones get down on the floor during free time and play with them. Older? Sit at their desk to teach them. Let them hug you and crawl in your lap during worship. Every child has longing to be close to the teacher, so make yourself accessible to them. The older kids become more inhibited with open displays of affection, So your sincere and personal attention is all you can give them. Talk with them! Convince them, "I Love You - And I'm honored to be your teacher!"

6) **PERSONALIZE YOUR MINISTRY!** Go the extra mile and step outside the classroom. Find out the kids' birthdays and send cards or call. If a child misses class, send a "missed you" note or make a call. Randomly call a couple of students each week just to say hi, or remind them of some neat thing they said in class and pray together.

*There is a high price to good teaching, and it's not available at a Bargain Basement Sale! You've got to be willing to pour your life out like a drink offering. H. Hendricks*

# Building Relationship Application

Classroom Discipline is all of our jobs. Knowing your kids and building relationships is more than half the battle.

Emphasis is to be highlighted on the following:

Knowing...

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| •Names         | -Requires Practice. -Use their names over and over! |
| •Parents Names | -No Strangers allowed!                              |
| •Prayer Needs  | -Keep a Prayer log.                                 |
| •Special Needs | -Know these; Use Grace!                             |
| •Interests     | -Want to know them?                                 |
| •Birthdays     | -Hmmm... Send a card?                               |

Knowing your kids **in detail** will help your classroom discipline tremendously. When you have earned the right to be called “Teacher”, by becoming an expert at those you would teach, then you will gain the students respect and love at the start.

**Discipline** in the classroom requires a very wide range of consideration.

- Prior to Class time
- Classroom check in
- Worship time
- Prayer time
- Story/exposition time
- Closing points
- Game time
- Dismissal

## Prior to Class Time

a. Be prepared

- Wake up early and have breakfast. No good result can come from a rushed morning. Old habits are hard to break. Get a new alarm clock!
- Arrive to Church early enough to make your copies, prepare your plan.
- Have your Session plan ready- Know what will happen each part of your class.
- Lesson planned well for your age group.
- Have follow up points (application points) prepared.

## **Classroom Check-in**

- Welcome Children and Parents at the door.
- Greet the children and parents by name, or introduce yourself as Teacher/Helper.
- Set goals with the Challenging ones with the parents present if possible.
- Seat/Assign them to their area.

## Free Time

- Structured free time can be arranged/assigned with blocks, puzzles, art, etc.
- Spend time WITH the kids in this free time. This is where you LEARN names.

## Worship Time

- We're TEACHING THEM... (Intro 85% rule)
  - Reverence for the Lord
  - Respect for their classmates
  - Participation in Worship
  - Singing with them exemplifies a Christian worshipping.

## Prayer Time

- Again, We're TEACHING THEM...
  - Reliance/trust in the Lord
  - God's Sure Faithfulness
  - Gratitude and Thanksgiving
  - Keeping a Prayer log -Tracks answered prayer.

## Storytelling

- Keep it age appropriate... Don't bore them.
- Watch for comprehension/understanding. Look for new ones- You may have to fall back and re-explain the Basics.
- Give application... Theirs -Not yours!
- Too Long? Too Much? Look for adjustments.

## Closing points

- Make your application points count. Hit home.
- Give them *Nuggets*. Memory cards/verses/thoughts.

## Game Time

- Craft and games should relate and reinforce your lesson.
  - Often times my goal is to tell the story as many times as I can.

## Dismissal

- Love 'em!
  - Say Goodbye to each child BY NAME!
  - Parents too... BY NAME! >Learn Them!
  - Share something meaningful that happened in class.  
i.e. teaching points, memory card, etc.
  - Been Naughty? -Share this too. (But Lovingly)

AWWW...

- Cell Phones are not a teaching tool.
- Teacher/Helper Non-participation.
- **My Pastors part - not ready?**
  - Classroom Dysfunctional?
    - Lighting? A/C?
    - Teaching period Too Long?
    - Avoid Burn-out... Communicate - share it!

# BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS WITH PARENTS!

It is a little more difficult to build relationships with parents because your time with them is short. Unless a parent volunteers their time as a helper in class or makes it a point to get to know you and ask you questions, you really only see them briefly at the door. So make this time count!

*When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad,  
and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart  
they should continue with the Lord.*

Acts 11:23

1.) **GREET EVERY PARENT AND CHILD AT THE DOOR!** Parents are positively effected by a cheerful show of welcome and concern by the teacher. Introduce yourself with a handshake to any new faces! Make them, and their child, feel wanted and welcomed. This will set their minds at ease while they are in the sanctuary. They need to know their child is in a safe, loving environment and being ministered to at the same time they are.

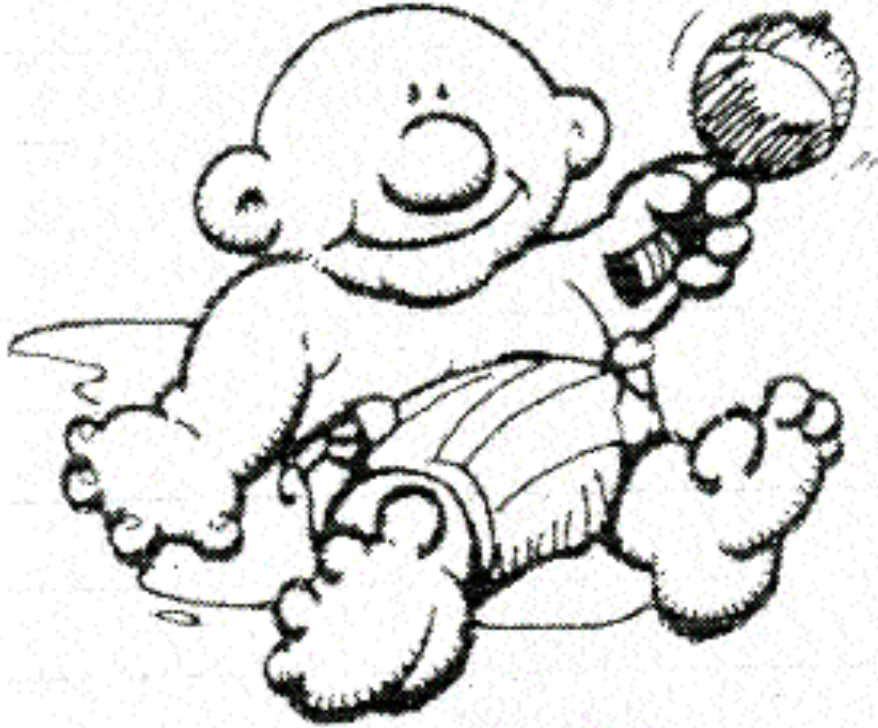
2.) **SAY GOOD-BYE TO EVERY CHILD IN FRONT OF HIS PARENTS AT PICK-UP TIME!** Sharing some joy from the class or pass on one of their children's special qualities, characteristics or contributions they may have made to the lesson can be very encouraging for parents. It lets them know their child is not just another face to you. That they matter enough for you to take notice and interact with them. We know time is precious and we want to keep the lines flowing as people pick up their children, a few quick words at the door is enough..."Johnny, I sure liked the way you sang to Jesus today!" "Bye Mary, thanks for visiting us. I hope I get to see you next week!" **CHILDREN LOVE THIS TOO!** It reconfirms your personal interest in them and builds your relationship with them also.

3.) **INVOLVE PARENTS IN YOUR CLASS.** Plan a special teaching to involve parents as helpers. If you feel comfortable, ask for assistance from different parents with craft projects, cutting, pasting etc. Maybe you need help planning a class party for the completion of a teaching unit. Creation, Noah and the ark, The Fruit of the Spirit, whatever! Pull them in and get them involved in what their children are learning.

# Know Your Kids

## NURSERY

(birth to walking)



- \* Only concerned with their own needs being satisfied.
- \* Responds to gentleness, love, holding and singing.
- \* At about six months the child begins to be shy and cry around strangers.
- \* Will put everything in their mouth.
- \* Explores with muscle activities (banging toys, etc.)
- \* Begins to establish "opinions" about God.
- \* Begins to understand "trust".
- \* Has a vocabulary - understands many words.

# TODDLERS

(Walking to 2 years)

Have an attention span of @ 10 minutes.

- \* Rapid Growth produces incessant and spontaneous movement.
- \* Fragile in health.
- \* Nervous system is sensitive to over-stimulation by noise and confusion.
- \* Senses of taste, touch, and vision, hungry for stimulation.
- \* Actions and objects are much easier to understand than words.
- \* Have little conception of numbers, time, and space.
- \* Confuse the imaginary and the real.
- \* Enjoys new freedom of movement and wants to be free to be an individual.
- \* Has little sense of future, only NOW.
- \* Wants attention: talking, holding, friendship.
- \* Curious.
- \* Does not understand sharing. Tends to be selfish.
- \* Views "things" and people as equal.
- \* Easily distracted.
- \* Moves from one toy or activity to another rapidly.
- \* Becomes increasingly aware of his feelings and other's also.
- \* Tests barriers or limits.
- \* Language is becoming more valuable.
- \* Easily frightened.
- \* Have very little "group" feeling.
- \* Are completely self-centered.
- \* Are timid and dependent on adults.
- \* Play alone, and parallel play with others.

Spiritually/Emotionally

- \* God is connected with the good things they want.
- \* God's Book is very special.
- \* A few words from God's Book can be repeated.
- \* Doing right is connected with pleasing God.
- \* Can think of Jesus as their best friend.



## 2 & 3 YEAR OLDS

### Attention span of 10 - 15 minutes.

- \* Adventuresome, eager to do and learn.
- \* Wants to touch, taste, smell, watch, etc.
- \* Must move around.
- \* Enjoys quiet times of listening to stories.
- \* Likes to talk and feels that his talking is more important than yours.
- \* Great physical development advances.
- \* Very curious, many questions asked.
- \* Tendency toward emotionalism.
- \* Aware of who he/she is.
- \* Uses "no" as an expression of independence.
- \* Parallel play (side by side) with others.
- \* Just starting to share.
- \* Likes to help and feel needed, imitates.
- \* Likes to talk and be talked to.
- \* Grows and learns as he/she plays.
- \* Needs individual attention.
- \* Likes to play stories, act out parts.
- \* Needs consistent discipline.
- \* Needs love, understanding and security.
- \* Likes the familiar, repetition.
- \* Has limited vocabulary; likes simple stories.
- \* Is concrete minded, learns through 5 senses.
- \* Interrupts stories; can sing easy songs.
- \* Is sensitive to the emotions of others.

### Spiritually/Emotionally

- \* Should receive happy impressions of Children's Ministry (Sunday School)
- \* Is able to understand how to thank and please God.
- \* Thinks of God as a real and loving Person.
- \* Learns of God through nature and experiences in which God is mentioned naturally.
- \* Needs to feel that his/her teacher and especially that God loves him/her.
- \* When properly taught, trustfully depends on the Lord.
- \* Learns to give because he/she loves Jesus.
- \* God made everything.
- \* God takes care of him/her day and night.
- \* Jesus is God's Son and He loves him/her.
- \* Prays when motivated.
- \* The Bible is God's Word.

# KINDERGARTNERS

(4 & 5 Year olds)

## Short attention span-about 20 minutes.

- \* Craves physical activity.
- \* Imagination is at peak, talks "constantly".
- \* Is apt to have temper tantrums. (NOT at this church!)
- \* Likes to pretend about anything.
- \* Begins to feel "big" or "old"
- \* Learning how to share.
- \* Learning right from wrong.
- \* Loves to hear stories, Loves to play stories.
- \* Loves to play stories.
- \* Still a concrete thinker-not ready for symbolism.
- \* Friends are extremely important.
- \* Still self-centered but moving from "me" to "we" concepts.
- \* Is growing in ability to get along with others.
- \* Is growing in friendliness..
- \* Is more conformable to discipline.
- \* Loves intensely and desires to please.
- \* Is easily brought to love and sympathy.
- \* Can memorize short verses.

## Spiritually/Emotionally

- \* Recognition that God works through people.
- \* Jesus is the Son of God.
- \* Jesus now lives in Heaven with God.
- \* Jesus is our best friend, He loves us and is always with us..
- \* That the Bible is God's personal message to us.
- \* Can sincerely worship the Lord; can be led to appreciate God through His wonders in nature.
- \* Speaks of the Lord in a personal way.
- \* Understands that God loves and cares for him/her.
- \* Knows that willful disobedience is sin.
- \* Can learn the reality of the Lord;s presence, concern, guidance, provision and wisdom.
- \* Is naturally trustful, but must be taught to trust and obey the Lord.
- \* May be ready to receive Christ.
- \* The Heavenly Father can be associated with strong, loving, earthly fathers.
- \* God's book tells how to please Him.
- \* Short memory verses to approximately 10-12 words.
- \* Learn to feel sorry when they break God's rules.

## Primary/junior: 1st & 2nd/ 3rd & 4th Grades (Six to Eight Year olds)

Have an attention span of 30 - 40 minutes.

- \* Are growing unevenly, with sudden bursts of energy.
- \* Need to manipulate and explore objects.
- \* Are concrete and literal minded.
- \* Interested in activity.
- \* Expression through movement and noise is necessary.
- \* Dramatizes - learns from acting out parts of the story.
- \* Good at memorizing.
- \* Likes group activities.
- \* Asks questions because he wants answers.
- \* Loves personal attention from teacher and needs it.
- \* Reads simple passages from the Bible itself.
- \* Appreciates the Bible as a special book.
- \* Likes to retell Bible stories. and play them.
- \* Is developing power to reason.
- \* Thoughts are concrete - cannot comprehend abstracts.
- \* Has sudden bursts of energy.
- \* Is susceptible to colds and communicable diseases.
- \* Demands varied activities.
- \* Wants to help, but needs the "know how."
- \* Grows and glows under praise for right actions.
- \* Likes children of the same age and enjoys stories about them.
- \* Is sometimes rebellious; tells tall tales.
- \* Prefers noncompetitive group activities.
- \* **BEGINS** to appreciate geographical and historical backgrounds.



### Spiritually/Emotionally

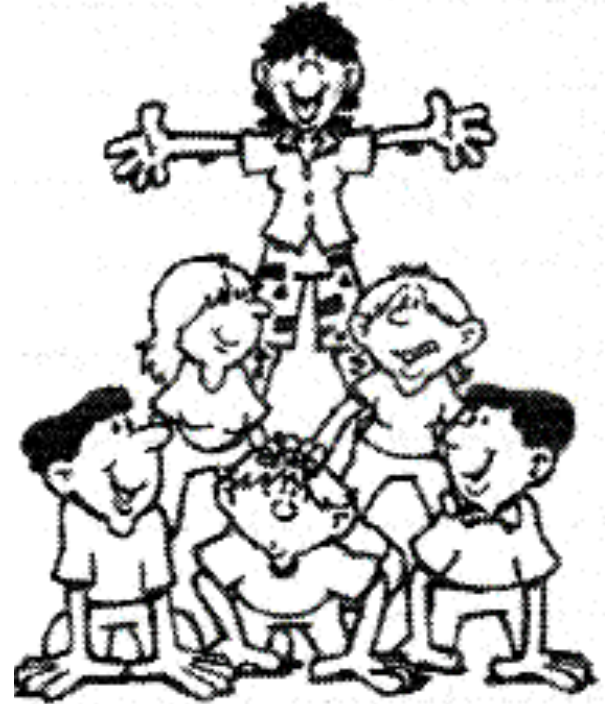
- \* Likes Bible stories that show God's power.
- \* Profits by spiritually mature examples.
- \* Is able to realize God's love and forgiveness.
- \* Learns reverence by precept and example.
- \* Often is ready to accept Christ as Savior.
- \* Can learn to pray and live for Jesus.
- \* Can solve problems by going to the Bible.
- \* **NEEDS TO BE TAUGHT** to confess sin promptly.
- \* Is curious about death.
- \* Likes action and missionary stories.
- \* God is the Creator.
- \* God is merciful, holy; He loves us, **BUT HE HATES SIN.**
- \* I can talk to Him at any time. He hears and answers prayers.
- \* Although I cannot see Him, Jesus is with me all the time.
- \* He helps me to do the right things is I ask Him to

## 5TH & 6TH GRADE

Nine to twelve years old

Longer attention span if material is interesting, 40 - 60 minutes.

- \* Reads well.
- \* Great curiosity.
- \* Has reasoning ability.
- \* Dislikes outward displays of affection.
- \* Is developing a value system.
- \* Slowly developing a control of emotions.
- \* Talkative at times.
- \* Competitive spirit.
- \* Enjoys teamwork.
- \* Ideals are being formed.
- \* This is the healthiest stage of life.
- \* Is growing in independence.
- \* Likes to attend camp and other outdoor activities.
- \* Enjoys sports.
- \* Can be encouraged to have high standards.
- \* Is interested in fairness.
- \* Likes to participate in class.
- \* Should be taught respect for authority.
- \* Has good memorizing ability; is alert and critical of own work.
- \* Is eager for information; active.



### Spiritually/Emotionally

- \* Is ripe for salvation.
- \* Responds to teaching on growing in Christ.
- \* Can use Bible to find references and solutions to problems.
- \* Can understand doctrinal truths (as the indwelling of the Holy Spirit) when taught with visual aids.
- \* **NEEDS ENCOURAGEMENT ON DAILY DEVOTIONS.**(who doesn't!)
- \* Has lively interest in persons-can be interested in winning those in own family and neighborhood.
- \* Has strong faith, but raises significant questions.
- \* Needs further development of spiritual concepts and values.
- \* God is a person; He wants our fellowship
- \* God has a plan for the life of each one of His children.
- \* Jesus is a real person; the second person of the Trinity.
- \* He came to earth, was born of a virgin, was the Messiah or "Promised One" of the Jewish prophets. He loves everyone, and proved His love by dying on the cross and shedding His blood so that we might be cleansed from sin. He rose from the grave, visited His disciples, and is living today in Heaven, and represents me before God the Father.
- \* The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity.

## Junior High (12, 13, & 14 Year Olds)

### Attention span of up to 60 minutes.

- \* Growing very fast and unevenly, awkward, clumsy stage.
- \* spurts of energy followed by fatigue.
- \* Engrossed in the perplexities of puberty, with girls maturing faster than boys.
- \* Are intellectually sharp.
- \* Jump to conclusions, and are immature in judgement.
- \* Are eager for answers to many personal problems, but often put on an indifferent front.
- \* Sense of humor often eases difficult situations; they love to tease.
- \* Crave new experiences, especially to become an adult and make their own decisions.
- \* Inclined to transfer loyalty from the home to an idolized hero or friends.
- \* Want to be assimilated as one of the gang so that their awkwardness isn't so conspicuous.



### Spiritually/Emotionally

- \* Crave emotional experiences and over-respond, from the heights to the depths.
- \* Are painfully sensitive, brutally frank, moody, fickle and rebellious.
- \* Need Christ as the One who understands when no one else does.
- \* Need to experience the stabilizing power of the Holy Spirit in ups and downs.

# High School

(15, 16, and 17 Year Olds)

## Attention span up to 60 minutes.

- \* Growing slowly now. Past the awkward stage.
- \* Exert great energy if interested (inspired).
- \* Crave normal, new experiences with the other sex.
- \* Are keen, inquisitive, daring, creative in working on their own ideas.
- \* Reason is developing, but as yet not clear or reliable.
- \* Often doubt, and want to test previously accepted ideas for reality and practicality.
- \* Quick to see humor in immediate situations.
- \* Assume a critical, sophisticated attitude to bolster self-confidence.
- \* Are inclined to rebel against the direct exercise of authority.
- \* Tend to be more individualistic, to form exclusive cliques centered around a common interest, on one social level.

## Spiritually/Emotionally

- \* Emotional upsets are deeper rooted and more lasting.
- \* Are interested in experimenting with all aspects of life.
- \* Need Christ as the great Master Builder who has the ideal plan for each life.
- \* Prime age for teaching with symbolism and parables.

