

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN A SUNDAY SCHOOL SETTING



Please reproduce this material for educational and training activities.

Written by Julie Popke for the MNO Synod Christian Education Committee



This module was created based on Classroom Management (ages 3-9) by Marie Kuhn and Classroom Management (grades 4-6) by Darlene Dahle, originally created by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada (ELCIC) for the "Learning Ministry Designs Binder". Used with the permission of the ELCIC.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT IN A SUNDAY SCHOOL SETTING

Information for session leader:

- Audience: Sunday School classroom teachers
- Time: 45 minutes
- Objective: To affirm and learn techniques for managing and establishing a positive learning environment and appropriate classroom behaviour.
- Note to the Leader: This session can be incorporated into a regular teachers meeting. Use and adapt any or all information as required.
- Space Requirements: Regular meeting space. Ability for participants to discuss in partners or small groups.
- Supplies: One sheet of paper and a pen for each participant.
- Handouts/Worksheets: What is your classroom management profile? (appendix I)
Classroom Management Checklist (appendix II)
Sunday School Participant Personal Profile (appendix III)
"Multiple Intelligences" fact sheet and chart (appendix IV)
Strategies for Managing Misbehaviour (appendix V)
- Advance Preparation: Photocopy appendices I and V and the Multiple Intelligences chart for each participant. Prepare at least one copy of each of the other appendices for participants to view. Copies can be made as required.
- Schedule:
- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| Introduction | 5 – 10 minutes |
| Presentation | 5 – 10 minutes |
| Activity | 10 – 15 minutes |
| Debrief | 10 – 15 minutes |

Session:

1. Introduction (5 – 10 minutes)

Begin with this or another prayer:

Dear Jesus who gathered children into your lap and loved them,

Be with our teachers this day as we gather to learn about and reflect on creating positive learning environments for our children. We understand that these children come to us from different backgrounds and experiences. Our goal is to offer all children love and encouragement and gentle reminders for appropriate behaviours. Guide us through our work now, so that we may enhance the effectiveness of our classes in order to bring your word to our Sunday school. AMEN

Introduce the session by saying:

Classroom management can be a difficult task for even the most experienced teachers. It can be even more daunting for a Sunday School teacher who may have to deal with a 'non-permanent' classroom, varying numbers and ages of children from week to week, and limited contact time with children, only seeing them once a week or less. You will be given information on how to establish a classroom conducive to learning and strategies for encouraging positive behaviours and interactions among the children in your class.

Ask all participants to offer a definition of classroom management and its importance.

Give the following (possible) definition: Classroom management refers to the practices and procedures used by a teacher to ensure that instruction and learning will take place.

Have participants complete the 12 questions from '*What is Your Classroom Management Profile?*' (appendix I). These questions will get participants thinking about how they currently manage their classes. Scoring and debriefing will occur after the presentation.

2. Presentation (5 – 10 minutes)

Many aspects of a classroom must be effectively managed in order to create a positive learning environment. The following should be considered when preparing for your teaching (included as a handout in appendix II):

Teacher

- ✓ Take care of yourself first. If you maintain a positive attitude the children will too.
- ✓ Get to know the children in your class as individuals. Ask parents to complete a '*Personal Profile Sheet*' (appendix III) to begin a discussion with each child. The information collected should be appropriately destroyed (eg. shredded) at the end of the Sunday School year.
- ✓ Establish and be consistent with rules and behavioural expectations. Discuss consequences of violating expectations. Clearly display expectations and consequences.
- ✓ Try to anticipate potential conflicts. Think through how you can prevent something from happening.
- ✓ Be a positive role model. Exhibit the behaviours you expect of the children.

Time

- ✓ Prepare a file of extra activities for children who finish early.
- ✓ Arrive early enough to prepare and set out materials.
- ✓ Complete projects, crafts, activities etc. yourself or with another child ahead of time to appropriately determine time requirements.
- ✓ If needed, carry parts of the lesson to the following week. It's better to allow the learning process to occur naturally than to 'finish what I've planned'. If you're in a team teaching situation where someone else will be finishing the lesson, be sure to communicate clearly what has been completed and what needs to be done.

Environment

- ✓ Should be appealing and welcoming but not over-stimulating.
- ✓ Appropriately sized for the number and age group of the children. The younger the children, the more space is required for movement.
- ✓ Free from noise and distraction as much as possible.
- ✓ Adequate temperature and lighting.
- ✓ Space for visual aids and displaying children's work.

Presentation of Materials

- ✓ Provide exemplars or models of an end product.
- ✓ Provide a variety of learning experiences. (Refer to Multiple Intelligences information in appendix IV)
- ✓ Provide written and verbal directions.
- ✓ Appropriate age and interest level for the children.

Children (and their behaviour)

- ✓ Immediately recognize and reinforce (reward) desired behaviours.

- ✓ Create classroom guidelines with students so they have a sense of ownership over the expectations in the classroom.
- ✓ Develop a system or code using "*Strategies for Managing Misbehaviour*" (appendix V) to let students know when behaviour is not acceptable.

3. Activities

Review '*Strategies for Managing Misbehaviour*'. In small groups, discuss situations in which each strategy could be used. Direct participants to strategies 4 and 5. Ask them to practise what they would say to children. For strategy #6, ask participants to generate a list of acceptable consequences for major misbehaviours.

Score results of '*What is your classroom management profile?*' to determine each person's classroom management style. Scoring is explained on the question sheet. Have participants discuss with a partner their management profile and what they are currently doing well and what changes they would like to make.

4. Debrief

Ask participants to write down a personal reflection of one or two concepts that he/she learned and how that can be applied to the classroom.

As a group, you may decide to create (at a later date) a general list of behavioural expectations for large group activities as well as for individual classrooms. Expectations change and will become less lenient when larger groups of children are together.

End with this or a similar prayer:

Lord,

Help us to have the strength and integrity to know when a difficult situation calls for patience and when it calls for discipline. We pray for the ability to be fair and consistent with all our children even when we are challenged the most. We are here in service to you to teach your word and example to your children. AMEN

What is Your Classroom Management Profile?

Procedure:

- ❖ Read each statement carefully.
- ❖ Write your response based on the scale below at the end of the question. Try to avoid using "3" as much as possible.
- ❖ Respond to each statement based upon either actual or imagined experience.
- ❖ Scoring instructions are below the questions. Do not score your results until directed to do so.

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral
4. Agree
5. Strongly Agree

- ___ 1. If a student is disruptive during class, I assign a consequence without further discussion.
- ___ 2. I don't want to impose any rules on my students.
- ___ 3. The classroom must be quiet in order for students to learn.
- ___ 4. I am concerned about both what my students learn and how they learn.
- ___ 5. If a student doesn't complete an assignment, it is not my problem.
- ___ 6. I don't want to reprimand a student because it might hurt his/her feelings.
- ___ 7. Class preparation isn't worth the effort.
- ___ 8. I always try to explain the reasons behind my rules and decisions.
- ___ 9. I will not accept excuses from a student who is tardy.
- ___ 10. The emotional well-being of my students is more important than classroom control.
- ___ 11. My students understand that they can interrupt if they have a relevant question.
- ___ 12. If a student requests a leave from class, I always honour the request.

Scoring:

Add your responses to statements: 1,3,9 – this is your score for the authoritarian style _____

4,8,11 – this is your score for the authoritative style _____

6,10,12 – this is your score for the laissez-faire style _____

2,5,7 – this is your score for the indifferent style _____

The result is your classroom management profile. Your score for each management style can range from 3 to 15. A high score indicates a strong preference for that particular style. After you have scored your quiz and determined your profile, read the descriptions of each management style. You may see a bit of yourself in each one.

With time and experience, your preferred style may change and become more diverse or focused. Also, it may be necessary to rely on a specific style when dealing with a particular situation. Perhaps a successful teacher is one who can evaluate a situation and then apply the appropriate style. The intent of this exercise is simply to inform you and arouse your curiosity about classroom management styles. Do not be hard on yourself or take it too seriously.

Adapted from: **Teacher Talk** <http://education.indiana.edu/cas/tt/v1i2/what.html>

Classroom Management Styles

Authoritarian

The authoritarian teacher places firm limits and controls on the students. Students will often have assigned seats for the entire term. Students must be in their seats at the beginning of class and they frequently remain there throughout the instructional period. This teacher rarely gives permission for students to be excused from class or recognizes excused absences.

Often, it is quiet. Students know they should not interrupt the teacher. Verbal exchange and discussion are discouraged. In this class, students need to follow directions and not ask why.

Students in this class are likely to be reluctant to initiate activity. The teacher tells the students what to do and when to do it. This teaching style does little to increase achievement and motivation.

A student comments on this management style:

I don't really care for this teacher. He is really strict and doesn't seem to want to give his students a fair chance. He seems unfair, although that's just his way of getting his point across.

Authoritative

The authoritative teacher places limits and controls on the students but simultaneously encourages independence. This teacher often explains the reasons behind the rules and decisions. If a student is disruptive, the teacher offers a polite, but firm reprimand.

The authoritative teacher is also open to considerable verbal interaction. The students know that they can interrupt the teacher if they have relevant questions or comments. This environment offers the students the opportunity to learn and practice communication skills.

This teacher exhibits a warm and nurturing attitude toward the students and expresses genuine interest and affection. The classroom abounds with praise and encouragement.

A student comments on this management style:

I like this teacher. She is fair and understands that students can't be perfect. She is the kind of teacher you can talk to without being put down or feeling embarrassed.

Laissez-faire

The laissez-faire teacher places few demands or controls on the students. "Do your own thing" describes this classroom. This teacher accepts the student's impulses and actions and is less likely to monitor their behaviour. The teacher strives to not hurt the student's feelings and has difficulty saying no to a student or enforcing rules. If a student disrupts the class, the teacher may assume that he is not giving the student enough attention.

This teacher is very involved with his students and cares for them very much. He is more concerned with the students' emotional well-being than he is with classroom control. The teacher wants to be the students' friend. It is difficult for students to learn socially acceptable behaviour when the teacher is so permissive.

A student comments on this management style:

This is a pretty popular teacher. You don't have to be serious throughout the class. But sometimes things get out of control and we learn nothing at all.

Indifferent

The indifferent teacher is not very involved in the classroom. This teacher places few demands, if any, on the students. The indifferent teacher just doesn't want to impose on the students. She often feels that class preparation is not worth the effort. This teacher may lack the skills, confidence, or courage to discipline students. The students have very few opportunities to observe or practice communication skills.

This teacher uses the same lessons plans every year, not updating them. A film will become a substitute rather than a supplement to a lesson. If there is time left at the end of class, she allows the students to talk quietly. As long as they don't bother her, she doesn't mind what they do.

A student comments on this management style:

This teacher can't control the class and we never learn anything. We don't even use the bibles that were given to us when we started Sunday School.

Classroom Management Checklist

Teacher

- ✓ Take care of yourself first. If you maintain a positive attitude the children will too.
- ✓ Get to know the children in your class as individuals. Use the 'Personal Profile Sheet' (appendix III) to begin a discussion with each child. The information collected should be appropriately destroyed (eg. shredded) at the end of the Sunday School year.
- ✓ Establish and be consistent with rules and behavioural expectations. Discuss consequences of violating expectations. Clearly display expectations and consequences.
- ✓ Try to anticipate potential conflicts. Think through how you can prevent something from happening.
- ✓ Be a positive role model. Exhibit the behaviours you expect of the children.

Time

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Presentation of Materials

- ✓ Provide exemplars or models of an end product.
- ✓ Provide a variety of learning experiences. (Refer to Multiple Intelligences information in appendix IV)
- ✓ Provide written and verbal directions.
- ✓ Appropriate age and interest level for the children.

Children (and their behaviour)

- ✓ Immediately recognize and reinforce (reward) desired behaviours.
- ✓ Create classroom guidelines with students so they have a sense of ownership over the expectations in the classroom.
- ✓ Ignore attention-seeking behaviour that is not disruptive to the classroom.
- ✓ Develop a system or code using '*Strategies for Managing Misbehaviour*' (appendix V) to let students know when behaviour is not acceptable.

Personal Profile Sheet

Please provide us with the following information about your child. All information given will be kept confidential with your child's Sunday school teacher. The information will be used to assist teachers in attempting to provide a program that meets the needs of all participants.

Child's Name _____

Nickname _____

Address _____ Phone Number _____

Birthdate _____ Date of baptism _____

Names of Parents/Guardians _____

Other family who are congregational members _____

Current age and grade _____

Names and ages of siblings _____

Allergies _____

Favourites

TV show/movie _____

Food _____

Colour _____

Subject in school _____

Sport Involvement _____

Pets _____

Extra-curricular activities/hobbies _____

Dislikes _____

The most important thing you need to know about my child is _____

Multiple Intelligences

The theory of multiple intelligences was developed in 1983 by Dr. Howard Gardner, professor at Harvard University. Dr. Gardner proposes eight different intelligences to account for a broad range of human potential in children and adults. By recognizing that children possess individual gifts, we can provide a classroom environment that appeals to all children. Providing activities that encompass the eight intelligences during lessons, will increase the chance that all children will be active, attentive participants.

The eight intelligences are:

1. Linguistic intelligence ("word smart") – The capacity to use words effectively whether orally or in writing.
2. Logical-mathematical intelligence ("number/reasoning smart") – the capacity to use numbers effectively and to reason well.
3. Spatial intelligence ("picture smart") – The ability to perceive the visual-spatial world accurately and to create projects based on those perceptions.
4. Bodily-kinesthetic intelligence ("body smart") – Expertise in using one's whole body to express ideas and feelings. Using one's hands to produce or transform things.
5. Musical intelligence ("music smart") – The capacity to perceive, create, and express musical forms.
6. Interpersonal intelligence ("people smart") – The ability to observe and make distinctions in the moods, intentions, motivations and feelings of other people.
7. Intrapersonal intelligence ("self smart") – Self-knowledge and the ability to adapt to situations based on that knowledge.
8. Naturalistic intelligence ("nature smart") – The ability to easily recognize and classify plants, animals and other things in nature.

Adapted from <http://www.as.wvu.edu/~scidis/learning.html>
<http://www.teachervision.fen.com>

* For additional information on this topic refer to the module **Jars of Treasure**.

Multiple Intelligences Chart

This chart will help you choose activities that accommodate each of the eight intelligences. Incorporating activities from each list will ensure that all children will experience success.

| Verbal-Linguistic | Logical-Mathematical | Spatial | Bodily-Kinesthetic |
|---|--|--|--|
| Choral speaking Storytelling Retelling Speaking Presenting Reading aloud Dramatizing Book making | Problem solving Measuring Sequencing Predicting Solving puzzles Using manipulatives | Graphing Photographing Making 3D projects Painting Illustrating Using charts Sketching | Hands-on activities Changing room set-up Creative movement Crafts Dramatizing Dancing |
| Musical | Interpersonal | Intrapersonal | Naturalistic |
| Humming Rapping Background music Playing instruments Tapping poetic rhythms Rhyming Singing | Classroom parties Cooperative learning Sharing Group work Peer teaching Discussing Brainstorming | Personal response Individual study Individual projects Independent reading | Nature walk Create a garden Reading outside Cloud watching |

Adapted from <http://www.as.wvu.edu/~scidis/learning.html>

Strategies for Managing Misbehaviour

The following strategies are practical suggestions for managing misbehaviour in the classroom. The strategies are listed in order of appropriateness from minor to major misbehaviours.

#1 IGNORE IT

At times, ignoring a minor misbehaviour is necessary so as not to interrupt the flow of the lesson. Be cautious when using this strategy. Ignoring may indicate to children that you are unaware of what is going on. Keep in mind the main goal which is to deal with misbehaviour in the least disruptive way possible.

#2 USE PROXIMITY

Minor misbehaviour can often be "nipped in the bud" before it becomes a major problem. One proactive measure is to circulate the room, using physical closeness to get students back on track.

#3 GIVE "THE LOOK"

Make use of facial expressions, eye contact, or hand signals while circulating the room to indicate to children you are aware of what is going on.

#4 USE VERBAL INTERVENTIONS

Sometimes, verbal interventions are necessary to direct children back to an activity. Use the child's name and simply state what is expected.

If the misbehaviour occurs during a group discussion or lesson, ask the child a question about the topic to draw him/her back in.

For older children, saying the child's name is often enough to prompt the child to determine the appropriate behaviour.

#5 USE "I" MESSAGES

This is a form of a verbal prompt most effective with older children. "I" messages contain three components:

- a) Describe the unacceptable behaviour in a non-blaming way: *"When people talk while I'm giving directions..."*
- b) Describe the tangible effect this behaviour has on you, the teacher: *"...I have to repeat the directions and that wastes time..."*
- c) State your feelings about the tangible effect: *"...and I get frustrated."*

"I" messages don't put children on the defensive and students may be more willing to change their behaviour.

#6 ENFORCE A CONSEQUENCE

When non-verbal cues or verbal reminders are not enough, enforcing a consequence may be necessary. Consequences should logically relate to the misbehaviour.

There may be times when a child's problems are so deeply rooted that the above strategies just won't work. Requesting the help of the Superintendent or another available adult may be necessary. Be sure to inform parents or guardians if a problem persists or can't be dealt with.

From: http://www.plsweb.com/resources/newsletters/enews_archives/30/2003/04/15/