

AMAZING CATECHISTS

Ten Essentials for Classroom Behavior Management

How do I get these kids to behave?!

#1. Take your work seriously. Prepare before class, arrive on time, and dress for the job. Treat your class like a serious commitment, and your students will, too.

#2. Model the behavior you expect from others. Your students will learn from you! Avoid sarcasm, bad language, and chit-chat with other adults during class time. When you do something wrong, take responsibility for your mistakes, apologize, and resolve to avoid the problem behavior in the future.

#3. Communicate expectations clearly. Have students build their own list of class rules at the beginning of the year. Do a rule-review before the start of prayers, games, or other situations where students tend to misbehave. Don't assume students know how to behave as you expect – explain, show, and practice.

#4. Avoid embarrassing your students. Build trust and confidence by handling sensitive topics with discretion and courtesy. When behavior needs to be corrected, speak with respect and understanding – sometimes you, too, have a hard time doing what you know is right!

#5. Never engage in a contest of wills. You cannot force students to behave. Avoid ultimatums, stand-offs, and high-pressure tactics. Always give your students a graceful way to rejoin the class when they are ready to behave.

#6. Provide activities during idle time, so students are not left to entertain themselves. If your students have nothing to do, they will find something to do! Plan a back-up assignment, game, discussion topic, review quiz, or other activity to fill times when students have to sit and wait.

#7. Use routines to save time and energy. Develop routines for arrival, dismissal, and other predictable parts of class, so you don't need to give new instructions every class session. Use the same general pattern for each class, so students know what to expect.

#8. Strategize. Make detailed class plans that flow logically from one activity to the next. Choose a balance of activities so students don't spend long periods at the same kinds of tasks. Put the hardest work earlier in the class session, and unwind with the fun stuff closer to the end of class. Allow time for questions, and for students to share their own thoughts about their faith.

#9. Did you “walk it out”? Walk through your classroom and test your plans. Are there any distractions you need to eliminate? Is it easy to move from one activity to the next? Are the supplies you need in place, and electronics in working order? Prepare ahead to prevent problems, minimize chaos, and give your class the best possible start.

#10. Respect your students. Meet them with the love of Jesus no matter what. Jesus doesn't give up on you, so don't give up on your students! The love of Christ is shared heart to heart, with patience, forgiveness, and understanding. How can you help each student grow closer to Jesus today?

This pamphlet provided by:

*... If mercy has been shown to me,
it is because Jesus Christ meant to
make me the greatest evidence of his
inexhaustible patience...*

--1st Timothy 1:16

Struggling with class discipline? You aren't alone!

My first year teaching religious education was a disaster. I was excited about sharing my faith, but I didn't know how to manage a room full of energetic children. I needed to learn how to calm the chaos.

The good news is that classroom behavior management is a specific set of skills that anyone can learn and master. No matter how crazy and out-of-control your class feels right now, you can turn it around.

To help other new and struggling catechists, I've put together a book of step-by-step strategies for managing classroom behavior in the religious education setting. Look for *Classroom Management for Catechists* in 2013 from Liguori Publications.

Learn to teach a class you and your students will love!

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inspired and growing as teachers
of the Faith.

It is our hope that you will visit
often, and even consider
contributing your own wisdom,
experience, and insight!

-Lisa Mladinich
Author of *Be an Amazing Catechist!*
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