

Chaos to Collaboration: Transforming Your Classroom from Frustrating to Fantastic!

1. **Perfect Practice:** Practice doesn't make perfect, perfect practice makes perfect. Take the time to train the children to respond quickly and accurately to your classroom management catch phrases. Make it a game and have them try to beat you at responding to your words. This trains the children to know your voice and obey when you speak. **Obey**=All the Way, Right Away, with a Happy Heart.

2. **Give Specific Praise Generously:** When the children obey your directives tell them **specifically** what you like about what they are doing: "I like the way you have your hands folded Miguel." "I love that you are looking at me ready to listen Jasmine." Be specific because the other kids will place value on those behaviors and actions and will engage in them more often. Inverting the problem will help you find the solution. Instead of spending the majority of your time correcting the disobedient kids why not spend that time specifically praising and rewarding the obedient kids?

3. **Prayer Pose:** What is the most important component of an effective classroom? Wise use of time. What if you could get the kids to listen quickly, transition smoothly, and focus on teachings to be transformed and go deeper in their relationship with God? Are you interested in that? The next three points **scale** beautifully. What does **scale** mean? It means these strategies work for one kid or one-thousand kids. If something doesn't scale in business, it is useless. These next three ideas are worth employing. These two words take the place of several sentences. "Please be quiet." "Settle down." "Look at me." "Fold your hands and stop touching your neighbor." "Face forward." "Keep your hands to yourself." "Stop talking." "It's time to focus on the lesson." **Prayer Pose** takes the place of all these directions. Prayer Pose saves time, effort, and energy. Once all the teachers are trained to use this two-word command a lot of teaching, discipleship, fellowship, and fun can take place in every classroom. How much time do waste trying to refocus your kids and gain control of the troops after every transition? Pie chart this baby and give me a present. 25%, 40%, 60%? Do you know how much time is wasted getting control and refocusing your class after every transition.

4. **Statues:** This one-word command helps the children to stop and become still to receive instructions when there is a change or transition, or new instructions are required. Statues works! Make a game out of it and see how fast they can stand still. The kids love it, and you'll love it too because it gives you the power to direct and lead your children without yelling or becoming frustrated. Would you agree that a class is effective or ineffective based on the speed at which a class can transition from one location, position, or subject to the next? You are transitioning constantly. There is a time-cost

associated with every transition. Become a master at it and you will have more time to teach the Bible.

5. **Chants:** If you want the kids to sit or stand, simply create a chant that you use every time you want them to sit or stand and they will quickly fall in line and obey. To sit, simply clap and chant: "Take a seat, take a seat, take a load off your feet! Hooooooo!" To stand up, simply chant: "On your feet, on your feet, take a load off your seat! Hooooooo!"
6. **Transitions:** Use "Statues" or "Prayer Pose" before pre-teaching the children what you want and how you want the transition to take place. Ex: "When I say go, stand up, push in your chairs and line up quietly." Employ perfect practice for transitions that occur several times each day. Lining up and walking to the auditorium or bathroom for example. You regain minutes back while making transitions fast and efficient.
7. **Bathroom Breaks and Checkout:** Two areas that pose the greatest threats to child safety and security are the bathrooms and checkout time. Pre-teach expected behavior in the bathrooms, never be alone with a child in the bathroom.
 - a. **Bathroom Breaks:** Bathrooms are a place where children can be attacked, molested, or abused. It is your responsibility to keep the bathrooms as safe as possible. Pre-teach expected behavior in the bathrooms, and **never be alone** with a child in the bathroom. Rule of 5: Please only let 5 children use the bathroom at a time. This ensures a manageable group of children. The less kids in the bathroom, the less chaos ensues. Beware of the **imbalance of power**. Children are abused and bullied by other children. Only allow younger kids to go into the bathroom together and only allow older children to use the bathroom together. Segregating the age groups ensures that older children are not able to have private access to younger children who are unable to stop or resist an older child from abusing them or bullying them. Line of sight is when a volunteer needs to enter the bathroom for any reason, the bathroom door is propped open, and they are always accompanied by another adult to watch them carefully as they assist children who need help, ex: accident, zipper stuck, etc.
 - b. **Checkout:** We must guarantee that each child is checked out by an appropriate parent or family member. With divorce, restraining orders, and broken families we need to carefully overmanage checkout time, so no child is released into the hands of the wrong person. Make sure you have several safety roadblocks and specific training for volunteers when an issue arises. Ex: Pagers, numbers, passwords, etc. If a person shows up who is not a designated guardian, please have volunteers get permission from a supervisor before letting the child leave the facility. The last thing you want is to have a child taken by someone who is not approved.

8. **Assign Roles and Responsibilities to Children:** They are the church.
- a. Greeters: Give children nametags and have them greet new children at the door and show them around to welcome them into the room. Designate other children to buddy up with the new child to bridge them into the class. Train the children to ask several questions to stimulate conversation. S.A.L.T: School, Activities, Leisure, Take them to someone new.
 - b. Hand out Bibles, materials, etc.: Designate several children to hand out Bibles and materials.
 - c. Dry erase board decorators: Choose a few children to draw and decorate the board for the day.
 - d. Clean Up Crew: Many hands make light work. Children can clean their own class.
 - e. Bible memory verse writers: Pick a child to write the Bible memory verse on the board for you.

Pastor Mark Carson, Calvary Chapel Modesto: mcarson@ccmodesto.com , www.ccmodesto.com