

Relationships Transform Lives

When we, as teachers, are focused on the details of getting through a class session, it can be easy to forget that no matter how good our activities or how important our lesson, nothing transforms a life more effectively than building relationships. In fact, relationship is the very reason Christ died and rose—that we might live in relationship, first with God the Father, and then with each other by the power of the Holy Spirit! Relationship is the essence of God’s kingdom.



THREE REASONS TO CARE

1. On any given day, a student who enters your classroom may be under tremendous stress. Even a young child may be dealing with situations such as a recent move, a new caregiver, death of a pet, lack of food or shelter, or maybe divorce. We never know where a student has been emotionally and spiritually. It is imperative that every child be given loving acceptance, smiles, and genuine interest. Often the child with the more negative behavior is the one who needs the greatest amount of loving acceptance.
2. As teachers, we have the opportunity to minister to children and youth simply through seeing each one as a real person made in God’s image. As we use each student’s name, talk, and encourage each one as a person worthy of our respect and love, children and youth absorb information about what God’s love looks like, sounds like, and feels like.
3. Students in a class may come from different schools and neighborhoods. We can minister to them by helping them learn how to build relationships with each other in a safe, loving environment. Students need to know that at church, people love them, accept them, and care for each other.

THREE BENEFITS OF CARING

- **Modeling:** Our job is to show, rather than tell, what it means to live as a follower of Jesus. As we show Christlike behavior, beliefs, and values, we effectively teach what it means to live as a Christian. Read 1 Corinthians 11:1.
- **Building the family of Christ.** As students build relationships, they are also experiencing the Church—the Body of Christ. Children and youth have the chance to know how believers in Jesus live and work together as a team.
- **Building relationships.** Not only do teachers get to teach students about God, they also have the opportunity to get to know them. They can see the world through the eyes of the children and youth they teach but also get to develop relationships within the family of Christ.

THREE WAYS TO SHOW YOU CARE

Here are three behaviors you can use in the classroom to help children feel welcomed every time they enter.

- **Conversation** and attention to what the student says at his or her eye level.
- **A kind touch** on the shoulder.
- **A genuine smile** that welcomes and shows a student you are glad to see him or her.