

Teacher-Student Relationships



Establishing, in the classroom, an atmosphere of trust and love that makes a student want to return is just as important as teaching good information. Adults sharing God's love and grace to children and youth can help them stay firm in their faith. Here are a couple of tips for building strong teacher-student relationships.

TRUST

As the teacher, you have the opportunity to be someone students can count on to be present on a regular basis. Children and youth need to feel that they can talk to you in confidence and without ridicule or criticism. And while you sometimes have to discipline, showing grace in that discipline helps them see God's love in you. As part of trust, students expect that what you present in class is accurate and useful.

ATTITUDE

Students like teachers who are positive, upbeat, confident, friendly, and willing to help. Leave your personal problems at home and give the students and youth your undivided attention. Nod, lean forward, and make eye contact when a student is speaking. Smile frequently.

FUN

While the subject matter you present is serious in nature, the atmosphere of the room shouldn't be dreary. You don't have to act silly or let chaos reign, but you can enjoy games with students, find joy in their discoveries, and maintain a happy classroom environment.

ACCEPTANCE OF FEELINGS

Children and youth often respond to situations with emotions rather than rational logic. Their reactions may seem childish because they have not learned how to control their feelings or how to think through situations. While you don't need to agree with everything a student says, you can be a sounding board and a sympathetic ear. Be open to the Holy Spirit's guiding as students share their feelings—stopping to pray with a student, give an affirming pat on the back, or even a quick hug may be just what they need.

PRAISE AND AFFIRMATION

Compliment and encourage children and youth frequently, mentioning specific actions you have observed. When students feel valued, they are more likely to participate in learning, and they begin to understand how God loves and accepts them.