

Tips & Ideas to Create a “Top-Notch” School



Adapted from a presentation made at the
Greater New York Conference Youth Evangelism & Leadership Congress
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THOUGHTS TO PONDER

Become the principal or teacher that your school can't live without.

Become the person that your students and parents can't live without.

Become the person that your school board, principal, coworkers, parents and students can count on, need and want to have around—because you are a model of excellence.

THIS IS JOB SECURITY AT ITS BEST

From the book

No time for Tact — 365 Days of Wit, Words, and Wisdom

By Larry Winget



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Tips To Use In Your Classroom

- Never ignore a disturbance during class. When a distraction occurs, acknowledge it. It's the best way to regain the attention of the class.
- Give kids an opportunity to reflect on what they have learned after each class. Have them write the main points down.
- Always deal with problems as they come up. Don't expect them to go away on their own. They won't!
- If your class does not have a good resource library, start one. Request parents to purchase just one book that is of high interest and age appropriate for the class. (The Conference Adventist Book Center has hundreds of books that are age appropriate, high interest, and focus on character development).
- Don't be afraid to smile and laugh a lot. Have fun!! Ask yourself the question: Am I developing lessons which are dynamic and hold the entire classes' attention?
- Chill out! Let kids be kids. They are not adults, so don't expect them to act like adults.
- Make sure you act like an adult!
- Do not neglect the academically challenged students in your class. Give them as much of your time and attention as the sharp kids; do not neglect the sharp kids—give them additional challenging work to free them from boredom.
- Get your class involved in at least one Christian service project each quarter. Service projects not only give students a chance to make a positive contribution to someone else's life, but they are great for building community.



Tips On How To Get Connected With Your Students

- Use snail mail or email a lot. Send birthday cards, thank you cards, pick-me-up notes. In addition to this, at the beginning of the school year, send each student a postcard in which you are welcoming them into your classroom.
- Get a *Facebook* and *Twitter* account. Use it to communicate and connect with your students.
- Use surveys and questionnaires to their advantage. Find out what your students are thinking on a regular basis. Any concerns expressed in the surveys and questionnaires need to be *carefully* reviewed and taken *seriously*.
- Avoid making promises to your students you can't keep. It not only disappoints them when promises are not kept, but your integrity will be undermined.
- Develop realistic goals and expectations—the harvest is developmental and will be demonstrated by student mastery, not just on a classroom examination, but by their ability to have retained this information to the end of the school year. Avoid depending on immediate results to determine success or failure. Lasting results come later—often much later.
- Communicate regularly. Don't give your students the impression that you are too busy for them.
- Ask adults in the church to “adopt” a student in your classroom, and pray specifically for that young person on a regular basis. (To do this you must first seek school board approval and make sure the parent who is serving as a prayer partner is approved by the church board.)
- Build self-esteem in your youth by affirming them both when they are alone and when they are with their peers. Over time make it a point to say something positive to each student.

- Avoid disciplining your students in front of their peers. It is best to handle discipline problems privately and one-on-one. In disciplining students, prayer should be an important component of the counseling session.
- When leading a discussion, refrain from making overly positive or negative comments when students offer their opinions. Remain as neutral as possible to encourage openness and honesty. However, make students aware of what the Bible/Spirit of Prophecy say regarding a particular issue. Do they agree with the biblical position? If not, why not?

Tips When Dealing With Parents

- Get to know the parent/guardian of your young people. If possible, visit them in their homes. Pray with them and tell them how much you appreciate having their child in your classroom.
- Always arrive at school early enough to greet the students and their parent/guardian as they arrive. Stay late for the same reason.
- Keep parents informed about anything that will help their child do better in school. Regular communication with parents is essential to show you care about their child. Do not share only concerns about their child's behavior, share some positive contributions as to how their child is contributing to the classroom—even if you have to search for something good to say!
- Avoid making promises to parents you can't keep!

Tips When Having Activities/Events/Meetings

- Always take pictures of your class activities. Put them on your bulletin board. Have kids make crazy captions, etc. They'll love it. Of course, you must check each caption carefully and make certain it is appropriate.
- Make sure every meeting or activity is well organized. It lets your students know they are important and reduces discipline problems. Start activities on time. Make sure you arrive before the activity begins and have everything set up in advance.
- If possible, serve refreshments at special events. It is relatively an easy thing to do and students love it. It also keeps them around longer for personal contact.
- Get a good refillable calendar so you can plan your activities with your students, months in advance. Plan to have some social activities with your class as well as meaningful educational field trips on an annual basis. If you don't intentionally put these events in your schedule, they probably won't happen and your students will be very disappointed.
- Never cancel an event or meeting simply because not enough students show up. You may need to adapt your plans, but don't send everyone home. Let those who show up know they're just as important as those who do not.
- Plan programs that meet the needs and interests of your students, not adults. Have your class present a program before the entire student body. If done well, they will be proud of their accomplishment.
- Do not do everything yourself, even though you can do it better. Learn to delegate. Get your students involved in creating a new bulletin board; get parents involved in assuming some responsibility for their child's education, etc.
- Bring in a variety of speakers with different preaching styles. Not all of your students relate to the same type of preaching style.
- Preview everything. Never use a video or DVD you haven't seen.



Tips For Professional Growth

- Take time to read books on professional growth relevant to the age of students you are teaching. This will enable you to not just grow professionally, but also find out what “makes them tick”.
- Take a Red Cross *First Aid* and *CPR* course. This will enable you to better handle minor emergencies in your classroom.
- Keep a file of referrals for crisis counseling. If you feel inadequate or unsure of yourself, do not hesitate to refer your students to professionals who have the appropriate training and experience.
- Don’t get in over your head on matters you don’t know much about.
- Do not take yourself too seriously. Nothing is ever as bad as you think it is, and nothing is ever as good as you think it is.
- When trying to improve the school, start with yourself. Ask yourself these questions: *Am I doing everything possible to help make this a great school? Are there any areas where I can improve to put me “over the top?”*
- Learn to say “no.” Make time for your family, friends, your outside interests, and your personal growth.
- Become a good listener. Learn to withhold your opinion until all the facts are in. Before offering an opinion—just listen! You will be much more helpful that way.
- Be a *Christian* role model to each of your students.
- Have a strong commitment to the values, ideals, standards of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

THE MOST IMPORTANT TIP

- **Love Jesus—when you love Jesus it will show.**