

Beyond Methodology

Teaching in the Tradition
of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart



New England, New Orleans and New York Provinces
of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart

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*Where I learned to teach was at the dinner
table, listening to the older Brothers talk about
their experience in the classroom.*

Special thanks to **Br. Donnan Berry, S.C.** who originally suggested the development and printing of this handbook. Br. Donnan recognized the wealth of experience and insights in the educational practices of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart over many decades and desired to have another means of effectively sharing that wealth of experience and insight with others.

This project has truly been a “Tri-Province” effort. The three United States provinces of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, the New England, New Orleans and New York provinces, collaborated extensively in the preparation of the text and accompanying web site. Without the support of the provincial councils of these three provinces and the Tri-Province School Leadership Committee, this handbook could not have become a reality.

Thanks also to those individuals most directly involved in the writing and preparation of these materials: **Sue Tessier** from Mt. St. Charles Academy in Woonsocket, Rhode Island; **John Madden** from St. Joseph High School in Metuchen New Jersey; **Vic Caffarel, Jan Breen, Barbara Camp** and **Jennifer Rouse** from Catholic High School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana; and **Thomas Mavor** and **Gene Tullier** from Brother Martin High School in New Orleans, Louisiana.

Visit: beyondmethodology.org
(an accompanying web site for this text)

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FOREWORD

Beyond Methodology

Recently the Church has articulated its keen interest in efforts by religious congregations to share their educational charism with lay collaborators.

Starting Afresh from Christ underscores the relevance and timeliness of this excellent handbook for teachers in Brothers of the Sacred Heart schools. It gives strong support to building the spirit of community in our mission: “Collaboration...is growing out of the need to share responsibility not only in the carrying out of the Institute’s works but especially in the hope of sharing specific aspects and moments of the spirituality and mission of the Institute.” *Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools* says that “consecrated persons must therefore transmit the educational charism that animates them and promote the formation of those who feel that they are called to the same mission.”

Beyond Methodology is skillfully conceived and designed to meet the challenges expressed in the orientations of the Church. Embracing the current historical moment as “a graced opportunity to join in partnership with laity” in our educational mission, we Brothers of the Sacred Heart are eager to share with our lay collaborators the wisdom and experience of the Brothers and lay women and men who have preceded us.

This handbook is a work of love by an interprovince team of lay women and men and Brothers. It achieves its stated goal of being “an imminently practical guide, one that is directly transferable to the immediate needs and challenges that classroom teachers face.” Simultaneously, as its title indicates, its content clearly goes beyond methodology. It is interested in forming the whole person of our students, presenting values, attitudes, and convictions that are the hallmark of teachers who minister in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

As a teaching tool, the accompanying web site, beyondmethodology.org, is excellent, combining the printed word with current technology through the use of audio clips and pictures. The repetition under various categories gives emphasis to key values: the importance of teachers having high expectations of themselves and of their students; respect for all students and

confidence in their potential for good and for success; availability; order and structure; the prominence of the gospel values of spirituality, compassion, and faith.

The “Reflective Prayers” which conclude each chapter are beautifully practical as well as spiritually beneficial. Teachers can use these as models of prayer that integrate faith and life, both to nourish their personal prayer and to assist them in teaching their students to pray.

New and not-so-new teachers will discover within this manual rich resources to guide and support their efforts to become the “master teacher” that the students in the U. S. Conference need and deserve. We join those who will profit from this handbook in thanking all who contributed to its preparation. Their gifts of time, talent, generosity, and dedication will undoubtedly reap a rich harvest among their colleagues and among the young people we serve.

Br. Bernard Couvillion, S.C.
Br. Paul Montero, S.C.
General Council, Rome

Introduction

“Where I learned to teach was at the dinner table, listening to the older Brothers talk about their experience in the classroom.”

Such comments about learning to teach have been echoed by countless Brothers of the Sacred Heart over the century-and-a-half of their educational endeavors in America. Even in recent times when requirements for state teacher certification, increased college credits, and student teaching have become commonplace, most teaching Brothers credit their close association with fellow Brothers, older and more experienced than they, with their own success as teachers.

Those taught by the Brothers of the Sacred Heart frequently tell stories about the Brothers such as Br. Rene adamantly refusing to accept work written in pencil or Br. Alfred calmly picking up stacks of papers accidentally dropped and scattered on the cafeteria floor. It is evident from these stories that the “teachers” from whom the younger Brothers learned taught more than academics and classroom management. These older Brothers were masters who embodied a perspective about their work that was simultaneously expansive yet humbly rooted in the mundane. No detail about their classrooms or their students, be it dust in the corner or a student’s impolite response, was too insignificant to warrant their immediate and complete attention. Yet, no one could mistake this attention to detail for small-mindedness because an aura of the spiritual animated their daily actions. Their focus was not merely on the dust in the corner. Rather, it was on the opportunity to teach young people that they should never let clutter hide God’s presence.

They were ultimately religion teachers whether they gave instruction in biology or civics, and their approach to the work was profoundly spiritual.

It is evident . . . that the “teachers” from whom the younger Brothers learned taught more than academics and classroom management.

Not surprisingly, their younger associates learned from these men. From casual dinner table conversations young associates acquired perspective and

instincts that far surpass methodology. In these less formal situations, the master teachers conveyed their intensity and conviction of deepest values. Younger Brothers learned through their daily, close association with these masters whose perspective, values and energies were directed toward the full development of their students. That formula, successful for decades within the community of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, is how the instincts of younger Brothers were developed into those of successful teachers.

The decline in religious vocations during the last several decades has threatened to subvert that formula for development of teachers. Now, however, there is a new era of opportunity. The Spirit has led many religious communities, and specifically the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, to understand that their declining numbers is a graced opportunity to join in partnership with laity in their educational mission. Simultaneously, many lay educators have come to recognize that innovative methodologies and technology alone are gilded promises—hollow and ineffective except in the hands of dedicated and caring teachers who mold young people primarily through the quality of their daily interaction. As Brothers and their lay partners come to recognize each other as complementary gifts, their joint mission, to evangelize young people through education, can be done more effectively.

The purpose of this handbook is to further that joint mission by promoting the development of teachers, both religious and lay, in a way that is analogous to the formula that the Brothers followed for decades in developing young brother teachers—through the intimate association of teachers with masters whose instincts and spiritual perspective are expansive yet humbly rooted.

*The Brothers of the Sacred Heart tradition
is clear in the expectation that students
develop as whole persons.*

No longer is it possible to gather teachers and masters daily around the dinner table. This handbook, however, is designed to give teachers similar access to the wealth of wisdom from the combined experience of Brothers and dedicated lay colleagues who have been working to educate young people in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart since 1821.

It is designed to be an imminently practical guide, one that is directly transferable to the immediate needs and challenges that classroom teachers face. But, it is not a simple “How To” book because it goes beyond methodology.

This handbook preserves through print and technology the collective wisdom of masters as expressed through their uniquely personal strategies, practices, words and pictures. In doing so it captures and makes available the intensity and conviction of their deepest values. In a sense it is a multimedia “dinner table” for all those who wish to associate with masters in the educational charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Interestingly, in actual practice, the views, suggestions, style and techniques of some of these masters are diametrically opposed. However, at the level of the essence of what it means to be “Teacher,” there is consistent uniformity in their perspective that reveals the wisdom of countless others who have preceded them. It could be summarized by saying, “Set high expectations for yourself first. High achievement of students will follow.”

So often in their practice and example, these masters in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart seem also to be acutely aware of the warning in the adage, “Be careful of what you ask for. You might get it!” They take great care to assure that their expectations are lofty—worthy of a life’s investment. As a result, the schools operated in their tradition have characteristically:

- ▶ Challenged students to stretch beyond their present abilities (academically, socially and spiritually)
- ▶ Shown respect for students and demanded their respect for others even in the midst of difficult circumstances
- ▶ Nurtured students to actively participate as important members of a learning community, and
- ▶ Enlarged students’ world vision and sense of responsibility to use their gifts in service to others.

In short, the Brothers of the Sacred Heart tradition is clear in the expectation that students develop as whole persons.

The successful teacher in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart,

therefore, is one who sets clear, high, worthy and profound expectations for himself or herself and for students and consistently holds students accountable for meeting these. At the same time, the successful teacher effectively communicates to students his or her unconditional commitment to students' success. He or she will not let a student go astray, will not let a young person "fall through the cracks," will not ever "write a student off" even when that young person consistently shows his or her worst qualities and acts irresponsibly. Failure or lack of development is simply not an acceptable option. In the expectations set for students and in daily interaction with them, the successful teacher in this tradition actualizes the spirit of Fr. André Coindre, the founder of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, who wrote about the young boys with whom he worked:

These young prisoners are worthy of personal attention. Guilty at an age when one is more careless than bad, more reckless than incorrigible, above all we could not give up hope of their changing. We had to surround them with help to form them to good. (André Coindre, Prospectus of 1818)



André Coindre

At the core of daily expectations we set for students must be our rock-solid belief in them and their essential goodness. Our expectations of students and every aspect of our interaction with them should express this belief and be tangible expressions of surrounding students with help to form them to good.

Clearly, then, education in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart goes beyond instructional methodology. It is solidly founded in the personal commitment of competent, caring, and faith-filled teachers who surround students with help to form them to good through daily instruction, formation, and witness.

Therefore, this handbook that desires to be a practical and useful guide to classroom management begins with clear but simple expectations we teachers in the Brothers of the Sacred Heart tradition have of ourselves. These expectations are presented in 12 chapters and are often explained with quotes and examples from Brothers and lay people who convey

the intensity of their convictions and their passion for educating young people. Clear and useful suggestions for classroom management and important expectations for students flow from each of these expectations that we should have of ourselves.

It is nothing less than sharing in the mission of evangelizing young people.

Each chapter reveals that teaching in a Brothers' school means participating in a work larger than individual teachers, more encompassing than any discipline or school site. It is nothing less than sharing in the mission of evangelizing young people. To help cultivate this perspective, this handbook includes 12 chapters describing expectations of ourselves as teachers and including suggestions for classroom management and reflective prayers for each of the chapters.

The intended audience for this handbook and accompanying website includes new and "not so new" teachers in schools affiliated with the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. It is a rich resource connecting many of the important values grounded in the no-nonsense practical experience of many masters and made available in a convenient format that is of immediate and practical benefit to classroom teachers. It is a repository of insight and wisdom for those who strive for grounding and excellence in the educational charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Welcome to our dinner table!

The successful teacher in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, therefore, is one who sets clear, high, worthy, and profound expectations for himself or herself and for students and consistently holds students accountable for meeting these.

*“I have come to a frightening conclusion.
I am the decisive element in the classroom.
It is my personal approach that creates the climate.
It is my daily mood that makes the weather.
As a teacher I possess tremendous power
to make a child’s life miserable or joyous.
I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration.
I can humiliate or humor, hurt or heal.
In all situations it is my response that decides whether a
crisis will be escalated or de-escalated, and a child
humanized or dehumanized.”*

-Haim Ginott
Teacher and Child (1976)
Avon Books

Chapter 1

We Expect Ourselves To Be Prepared

Br. Robert Connolly describes the type of teacher who is a role model, the type of teacher that students deserve to have:

To be a role model, the kids have to look up to you. Kids look up to people who “have it all together.” And so, for me to be an effective role model for the students, I have to present to them a picture of a teacher who knows what he is about, knows what he wants to get done in the classroom and gets it done. In other words, I have to be a person who is well prepared, not just in his subject matter, but well prepared to handle the class, the whole class.

—Br. Robert Connolly, S.C.

This level of preparation does not happen by accident. It is the result of intentional planning, deliberate follow-through, and meticulous attention to detail. Notice how Br. Brian Curry incorporates planning and attention to detail in the following description of how he prepares for instruction:

A teacher has to be really well prepared for the class he teaches. At the beginning of the year he should know what he is going to teach from the beginning to the end. It takes a few years, but I think a teacher has to collect materials that are relevant to his subject.

What I do is begin with a folder, for example, on Anglo-Saxon literature. Anything I come across related to Anglo-Saxon literature I’ll keep in the folder. Eventually, I move what is relevant into a separate folder. And then I’ll sit down and prepare a book on the complete course I plan to teach. It will take a while to do this, but I think a new teacher should keep in mind the importance of meticulous, long-range preparation. I include the actual materials and handouts that I will use in classes in the book and I divide it into 37 weeks. There are usually 36 weeks in a year, but I add an extra week to assure that I always have enough material. And in this book I have

reading requirements for students and all the assignments for them. I also have the test dates and dates on which things are due. I look at the school calendar and set this up at the beginning of the year.

—Br. Brian Curry, S.C.

Not every teacher, new or old, will approach the task of being prepared for instruction in the same way as Br. Brian. What is important, however, is that he is prepared—thoroughly prepared, not just for a class or for a day, but for the year. There can be no doubt that the commitment to thorough preparation for instruction is a characteristic of successful teachers in our tradition.

When we say, “We Expect Ourselves to be Prepared,” here are several practical examples of what we mean.

Knowing Our Subject

Ideally, we will be experts in our content area before we step into the classroom. Even when that is the case, being prepared means making preparations that include:

- ▶ Engaging in serious study of our subject matter to develop our knowledge base prior to entering the classroom
- ▶ Re-reading material or re-working problems that will be presented to students as a routine part of proximate preparation for instruction
- ▶ Continually reading about our subject area and about current events to enhance our knowledge as a resource for students
- ▶ Mentally scripting (or even writing out verbatim) instructions and key explanations for each class. Effective teachers do not depend on ad-libbing any part of their instruction that is critical to students’ progress.

Knowledge of our subject matter and careful attention to the manner of its preparation are critical aspects of thorough preparation that must be pursued with intensity throughout one’s teaching career.

Arranging the Physical Setting of the Classroom

All good performers and entertainers carefully plan the physical setting in which they work. They are keenly aware that a brilliant performance can be ruined by an unnecessary distraction. Likewise, as teachers, being prepared means that we take control of the physical setting where we perform, and we make it our own. Therefore, before we ever face students in the classroom, we prepare for how we will perform there in ways such as these:

- ▶ Visualizing the classroom with students to simulate the actual instructional setting
- ▶ Considering student and teacher traffic patterns in order to facilitate easy movement within the room
- ▶ Deciding where book bags and other student materials will be kept and handled
- ▶ Anticipating potential physical distractions and taking measures to eliminate or at least control them
- ▶ Arranging furniture in the classroom in such a way as to allow close proximity to students and clear teacher sight lines around the classroom.

Taking control of the physical setting of the classroom by making adjustments to that setting prior to meeting students is another essential component of being prepared.

Making the Classroom Inviting and Pleasant

In addition to arranging the physical setting of the classroom, being prepared involves making and maintaining the physical environment in the classroom as a pleasant and comfortable place for students. This includes paying consistent attention to:

- ▶ Maintaining a comfortable temperature in the room
- ▶ Promptly attending to items in need of repair or re-painting
- ▶ Keeping the room free of trash and clutter

- ▶ Providing some type of personal touch like motivational bulletin boards, instructional displays or samples of student work.

Everything in the environment teaches. Organized and tidy work areas have been a hallmark of the Brothers going back to their founder, Fr. André Coindre. Creating and maintaining an attractive, comfortable classroom with personal touches, therefore, is a part of what we need to do to be prepared. This attention to the classroom environment is especially important when a classroom is shared with one or more other teachers who depend on one another to have a neat and orderly environment when they come in.

Everything ought to sparkle with cleanliness: the children, the workshops, the kitchen, the refectory, and especially the dormitories. . . . See to it that the bed sheets are changed regularly, that dirty linen not be left around, that any fleas are destroyed, etc. The world, which only takes account of the exterior, will have little regard for the interior if all of these things were to be neglected.

André Coindre

Developing Lesson Plans

Our athletic teams make long-range plans, condition, train, and practice to prepare for their seasons. Once a season begins, they tweak their long-range plans, develop specific plans for each contest, and drill and prepare themselves for any contingency. Classroom management requires the same level of commitment and planning to be successful. Therefore, being prepared includes:

- ▶ Knowing state and school requirements related to learning outcomes and standards of student performance and achievement
- ▶ Understanding the sequence of skills developed within the school's curriculum and aligning instructional plans to be consistent with that sequence
- ▶ Planning each course we teach for the entire year in advance, including major projects, activities, and assignments

- ▶ Breaking the annual plan into smaller units (quarters or trimesters) consistent with the school's calendar to better ensure proper pacing throughout the year
- ▶ Breaking quarter or trimester plans into much more specific and detailed weekly and daily lesson plans
- ▶ Having at least two days of instructional materials completely prepared in advance
- ▶ Periodically and routinely reviewing instruction in light of desired learning outcomes and standards and adjusting instruction as needed to attain these.

The importance of developing lesson plans with a long-term perspective cannot be overstated. We need to know where our classes are going, how they are going to get there, and why. We cannot give our students the education they deserve if we do not plan appropriately. The effective teacher has to have a sense of the big picture—he or she has to understand how one day's lesson prepares for the next and how together they help achieve the overall course objectives. In addition, the effective teacher is always prepared with plans “B” and “C” in the event that the original plans for the day do not go well.

Planning a Variety of Activities

We recognize that students bring to the classroom different levels of interest and enthusiasm for any given topic. They also come with vastly different experiences and knowledge and, of course, with different learning styles and attention spans. So, critical to our being prepared is intentional planning to address these differences by considering questions such as the following as we prepare lessons:

- ▶ How can I pique student interest in this topic?
- ▶ How can I connect the lesson with some prior experience most students have had?
- ▶ How can I encourage students with different preferences in learning styles to each have a strong interest in the topic?

- ▶ How can I encourage each student, especially those with a poor record of success, to believe in his or her capacity to successfully handle the topic?
- ▶ What can I do to ensure success of each student?

Intentionally planning strategies to maintain students' attention and to attend to their legitimate differences in learning styles is a way of providing personal attention to them and is essential to good preparation.

Making Professional Presentations

The reality is that the quality and efficiency of our presentations will affect the success of our students' learning. Therefore, being prepared includes attention to the smallest of details that contribute to the effectiveness of instruction including:

- ▶ Preparing handouts and instructional materials that convey a sense of care and professionalism through their high quality, accuracy, and neatness
- ▶ Establishing efficient routines for distributing instructional materials such as having them counted and stacked according to student seating arrangements
- ▶ Establishing efficient routines for returning graded student papers that respect students' privacy and dignity
- ▶ Previewing all videos and presentations by others (such as guest speakers or student presentations) to ensure their appropriateness
- ▶ Carefully selecting brief segments of videos and weaving them into instruction in a way that promotes clear and specific instructional objectives rather than showing "whole period" videos
- ▶ Setting up and checking all instructional equipment (TVs, VCRs, DVDs, projectors, computers, etc.) in advance to reduce the possibility of equipment failure hampering instruction
- ▶ Cueing segments of videos and pre-recorded materials used in instruction

- ▶ Planning lighting during visual presentations that allows for both quality viewing and supervision of students
- ▶ Writing clear and carefully developed directions for all major projects and assignments
- ▶ Breaking major assignments or projects into logical stages to enable close monitoring of student progress
- ▶ Preparing supplemental activities in advance that can be used effectively should the need for a backup instructional plan arise.

One of our goals must always be to provide students with high quality and very professional instructional experiences. Doing so promotes student learning. It happens only with careful preparation and attention to detail.

Creating Formal and Informal Assessments

To be most effective, instruction needs to be carefully targeted to the needs of the students. Therefore, part of being prepared includes:

- ▶ Including diagnostic activities in instruction on a routine basis
- ▶ Routinely using an item analysis of test questions to identify patterns that indicate gaps in students' knowledge or skills
- ▶ Observing student participation in discussions as an indication of student interest in a topic
- ▶ Observing students' voluntary answering of questions and the accuracy and thoroughness of those answers as indicators of students' knowledge of and proficiency with content being covered
- ▶ Adjusting instructional plans in light of questions such as, "What do most students already know about this topic?" and "What knowledge or skill is it essential for students to have?"

Planning for formal and informal assessments of students' knowledge is an essential part of being prepared.

Making Mental Preparations

No doubt, effective instruction is a type of performance. Even for veteran teachers, sometimes things “click,” and sometimes they do not. One of the goals of an effective teacher in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart is to be prepared in such a way that we maximize our potential for success and effectiveness and minimize the possibility of a lesson failing. Therefore, being prepared includes the following:

- ▶ Allocating time within each class by setting targets or estimates of time based on the importance of the instructional activity
- ▶ Intentionally planning and even scripting transitions within each class period
- ▶ Creating cue cards or outline notes of each lesson as a technique for maintaining our own focus and organization throughout a lesson
- ▶ Anticipating difficult spots that might occur within each lesson and developing strategies to handle those difficult spots
- ▶ Anticipating how students might respond to different segments within a class and visualizing in detail what their active participation would entail.

As Br. Brian Curry stated in the quote at the beginning of this chapter, it takes time—years even—for a teacher to become fully prepared. Being prepared, however, is an important attribute of teachers in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Every teacher in this tradition needs to prepare intentionally and methodically by mastering content, arranging the physical setting of the classroom, creating a pleasant environment, planning with a long-term perspective, maintaining student attention, providing professional presentations, and assessing student needs. When these things are done, we will be ready to meet the next major expectation of ourselves—leading classroom learning.



Chapter Summary

Be Prepared

- Know your subject
- Arrange the physical setting of the classroom
- Make the classroom inviting and pleasant
- Develop long-term lesson plans
- Make professional presentations
- Use a variety of assessment types

Reflective Prayer

“The Brothers should never enter the classroom without having carefully attended to the immediate preparation of the class work. They should not forget that they owe the whole time of school to their pupils, and that they must not occupy any part of it in study or in doing anything for themselves.”

(from the 1928 *Rule of Life*, Brothers of the Sacred Heart, p. 215)



Lord, I wasn't ready for them today.
I'm not sure why it happened. I tried to fake my way through it.
I'm usually pretty good at this, not that I do it often.
But I did today, and it didn't work.

Did I cheat them? Does it really matter that just once they didn't
get the attention and preparation that they deserve?
After all, Lord, they don't always give me their best.
It was only one day. You know I'm usually ready.
Why do I feel so guilty? Why did I let it happen?

There are plenty of things I can blame it on. I didn't really feel well
last night, and I thought I'd have time this morning to prepare.
After all, I didn't know that a parent was going to show up
unannounced before school.
See, Lord, it really wasn't my fault.

I sound like my students. I'm whining.
I'm not owning my professionalism, my responsibility.
I'm making excuses.

Help me, Lord, to let go of today.
Help me to remember my humanity, my imperfections.
Help me to forgive myself as you forgive me.

I know that You are entrusting these students to my care.
I accept that they deserve my best, my time, my energy, my readiness.
I take this trust seriously.

I wasn't ready for them today, Lord.
I will be ready tomorrow.

Chapter 2

We Expect Ourselves To Lead Learning

The teacher is a leader of learning who must make use of his or her best instincts and judgments in directing student learning. Mr. Ed Powers illustrates this quality of teaching in his comments about standards and the need to be flexible in implementing them:

I think to be an effective teacher, you have to have standards—standards that are clearly communicated to students. You have to be committed to those standards, but you shouldn't make those standards iron-clad rules that imprison students. I think we need to understand that students are growing toward those standards. If you give students a clear set of standards and then model for them, it will be a lot easier for them to learn effectively.

—Mr. Ed Powers

In other words, teachers cannot rigidly follow even well-prepared, predetermined plans or iron-clad procedures. Students will often present unexpected circumstances and needs. Rather, effective teachers are real leaders called upon to make judgments, to take control of the learning environment, and to direct the learning experience of young people.

When we say, “We Expect Ourselves to Lead Learning,” here are several practical examples of what we mean.

Using Time Effectively

Educational research is quite clear in demonstrating a direct correlation between “on task” time and student achievement. Without a doubt, time is a precious and limited resource, and one of the most important lessons we can teach students is the responsible use of time. As the adults directing student learning, teachers have the primary obligation to use instructional time responsibly and effectively in ways that include:

- ▶ Arriving at the classroom early whenever possible, but always arriving on time

- ▶ Insisting that students arrive on time and are prepared for class
- ▶ Establishing beginning-of-class routines that start with how students enter the room, take their seats, prepare materials, and respond to the bell or tone starting class
- ▶ Teaching students through explicit instruction and by example that every minute of every period of every day is important and is to be dedicated to learning activities
- ▶ Organizing classroom activities in ways that maximize active rather than passive participation of students
- ▶ Insisting upon the constant attention of all students
- ▶ Never missing or being late for an appointment or meeting, especially with students or parents.

Punctuality is a form of respect. Effective utilization of class time is a form of responsible stewardship of gifts. Both are important tools in the formation of young people. Part of leading learning involves the careful and effective use of time.

You're cheating students if you don't teach bell to bell. Five minutes every day chatting multiplied by all the days of the year equals cheating students of valuable time.

—Br. Nicholas Geisenberg, S.C.

Maintaining Eye Contact and Using Non-Verbal Messages

Teachers with superior classroom management skills rarely need to discipline students to correct classroom misbehavior. These teachers are continually alert and aware of the students, have consistent and fair policies and practices, build trust with their students, and prevent inappropriate behavior before it starts. They use a variety of non-verbal techniques to lead learning and to control interaction within the classroom. Thus, they prevent most classroom discipline problems. These techniques include:

- ▶ Moving continuously around the classroom and hovering in potential trouble areas

- ▶ Watching the students and never turning away or becoming absorbed in tasks that prevent an awareness of the whole room
- ▶ Scanning the classroom constantly for inappropriate behavior so that no portion of the room is ever “unattended”
- ▶ Making direct eye contact with as many individual students in different parts of the room as possible
- ▶ Pausing after giving directions to observe that each student is complying with expectations
- ▶ Intentionally adjusting speaking volume as a technique to promote appropriate attention
- ▶ Intentionally adjusting pace of speaking as a technique for creating emphasis and promoting appropriate attention
- ▶ Cultivating and using a “serious tone of voice” to cue the entire class to respond to expectations
- ▶ Consciously using pace of instructions, activities, tasks, and transitions as management tools and carefully eliminating “dead time” which frequently leads to behavior problems
- ▶ Using a “pointed stare” with a firm facial expression as a cue that attention or behavior needs immediate adjustment
- ▶ Combining a stare and physical movement toward an individual student while continuing instruction to cue a more serious warning to a student needing to adjust behavior or attention.

Proximity alone will prevent most classroom discipline problems. As Harry and Rosemary Wong state in *How to be an Effective Teacher: The First Days of School*, “A teacher’s discipline problems are directly proportional to the distance from the students.” An effective teacher, however, is a leader of learning who uses a wide variety of subtle but very effective non-verbal techniques to let students know that a well-defined line is about to be crossed. In doing so they are able to keep discipline low-key and unobtrusive, maintain an even temperament, and continue to lead learning without interruption.

Giving Directions

As a learning leader, the teacher must give directions to students many times each day. Because this happens so frequently, it is easy for teachers to take this part of leading learning for granted and fail to give it the full attention it needs to be most effective. Leading learning effectively through directions includes:

- ▶ Ensuring that directions are clear, complete and authoritative so that unnecessary questions about directions can be avoided and so that student focus is not interrupted by additional directions for unanticipated issues
- ▶ Including examples whenever appropriate in directions so students have a model on which to base their work
- ▶ Anticipating legitimate questions or points of confusion related to the directions and addressing these as a part of the directions
- ▶ Prescribing in all directions and enforcing standards of neatness and quality for all student work
- ▶ Carefully planning and even scripting verbal directions to ensure their clarity and completeness
- ▶ Creating the expectation that students read or listen to directions and follow them by refraining from unnecessary repetition of directions or redundant responses to questions about directions.

Poorly prepared or incomplete directions contribute to student underachievement and classroom misbehavior. Because giving directions is such a critical part of leading learning, every teacher will experience more success and fewer disruptions if he or she pays careful attention to this aspect of instruction.

Handling Questions

One of the joys of teaching is dealing with the questions students ask. It is also one of teaching's biggest frustrations. Most teachers have dealt with the situation when they have just finished explaining something, see a raised hand, and call on the student only to hear a question they had just finished answering. Students may also use asking questions as a way of getting a teacher "off the track" or of delaying a test or quiz. These types of situations

highlight the importance of handling questions as a part of leading learning. Effective teachers handle questions and thus effectively lead instruction by:

- ▶ Creating a classroom environment where legitimate questions are encouraged, handled seriously and valued
- ▶ Establishing routine classroom procedures for questions that include when questions are appropriate and how students with questions are to be recognized
- ▶ Giving public and private recognition to those students who ask thoughtful questions that demonstrate their attention and attempt to intellectually grapple with a topic or issue
- ▶ Creating a safe environment for student questions by not allowing laughing at or put-downs of students asking questions
- ▶ Minimizing the potential disruption of questions by intentionally limiting the amount of instructional time given to handling questions
- ▶ Involving all students in questions by initially inviting them to publicly answer other students' questions when possible and appropriate
- ▶ Teaching students how to formulate questions from reading assignments and lectures
- ▶ Encouraging students to keep a notepad on their desks where they can jot down questions so they will not forget to ask them later
- ▶ Anticipating what students might find confusing and introducing that material more slowly or with visual aids to eliminate unnecessary questions
- ▶ Carefully crafting teacher questions to avoid a "Yes" or "No" student response as a strategy for promoting higher level thinking.

Cultivating the practice of student questioning is essential to developing students as active, lifelong learners. The effective teacher, therefore, understands that handling questions is a very important part of leading learning.

Handling Requests

Someone who has never taught before would likely be surprised by the frequency and variety of requests that teachers receive—requests to go to the restroom; to get books, paper or other materials; requests to sharpen a pencil; requests for a student to be excused to blow his or her nose; requests to move to another location; requests to throw trash away—at times the list of requests seems

endless. The frequency and timing of such requests, even when motivated by genuine need, can make it very

What is clear is that effective teachers have a pre-established procedure for handling such requests that helps maintain academic focus and minimizes the potential for discipline problems while respecting the dignity of each student.

difficult for a teacher to maintain the focus of the class and often lead to disruptions and discipline problems. Some teachers handle this challenge by adopting a very strict policy that no one leaves the classroom—ever! Other teachers make case-by-case individual decisions regarding requests, granting some and refusing others. What is clear is that effective teachers have a pre-established procedure for handling such requests that helps maintain academic focus and minimizes the potential for discipline problems while respecting the dignity of each student. They lead learning through handling requests by:

- ▶ Knowing and frequently reviewing school rules or policies regarding students leaving the classroom
- ▶ Developing class procedures for a variety of student requests that are consistent with school expectations and that differentiate “emergency” and “non-emergency” requests
- ▶ Explicitly explaining to students at the beginning of the year the procedures for requests with examples of various contingencies
- ▶ Making sure that non-emergency requests such as sharpening pencils and throwing away trash are covered in detail in classroom rules

- ▶ Ensuring that procedures and practices of handling requests minimize intrusions into class time, maintain supervision and accountability of students, and allow for individual needs to be met without unnecessary embarrassment
- ▶ Letting students know that they should inform the teacher (privately and confidentially) if there is a medical problem that they would like the teacher to take into consideration
- ▶ Periodically discussing with students the importance of on-task class time and its correlation with student achievement
- ▶ Consistently following the established procedures regarding requests
- ▶ Providing appropriate supervision and preventing abuse by monitoring the time and frequency of students being out of the classroom.

The most difficult types of requests that teachers must handle are those involving requests to leave the classroom. Teachers must be aware that sometimes those requests may be avoidance strategies on the part of students, but sometimes they are motivated by necessity. Both vigilance and trust are needed to discern appropriate response to students.

If a student wants to be continually excused from the classroom, maybe we need to look a little bit more into why...why they need to escape all the time.

—Ms. Cathy Sorkozy

Many teachers find it effective to tell their students that they may not leave the classroom except for “emergencies” and require students to discuss such emergencies in private outside of class. Coupled with specific examples of what constitutes an emergency, this procedure gives students appropriate direction and accountability but still respects their privacy and dignity. Regardless of the procedures teachers adopt for handling requests, effective teachers are alert in monitoring such incidents and involve guidance counselors and parents if the situation warrants. Effective teachers also recognize that all student requests have the potential for distraction and

disruption, and so, a critical part of their planning as learning leaders involves handling requests.

Distributing and Collecting Materials

Since on-task time correlates so significantly with student learning, teachers should have efficient procedures for even the most mundane classroom routines such as distributing and collecting materials. Thus, the effective teacher will lead learning through his or her manner of distributing and collecting materials in such ways as:

- ▶ Having materials counted out and stacked by rows or sections of student seating ahead of time to facilitate distribution
- ▶ Teaching the students to follow an efficient routine that quickly and without disruption distributes necessary materials (for example, handing the correct number of papers to the first person on each row or a person in each section and having him or her distribute them in a front-to-back or clockwise manner)
- ▶ Teaching the students to follow an efficient routine that quickly and without disruption collects homework or other materials to be turned in (for example, having students pass papers across the room to their left so that the teacher can collect materials from those seated on the end while maintaining sight lines throughout the room)
- ▶ Establishing a routine for distributing graded work that quickly and efficiently distributes the papers while protecting the privacy of student grades (for example, placing graded work in folders with students' names, which can then be distributed in groups according to student seating).

For assignments that are not being collected (but corrected as part of the class), the teacher might want to just make note of who did **not** complete the work and enter the complete information later. The key is that efficiency in distributing and collecting materials is an important part of leading learning. Efficiently handling mundane tasks such as these increases on-task time and thus contributes to student achievement. Further, it reduces the

possibility of disruption and the need for discipline. Such seemingly small details as these are well worth careful attention and planning.

Remaining Flexible

Most teachers have often been faced with questions or comments from students that are sincere but seem to have no bearing on the lesson. It is always a judgment call for the teacher in those cases to decide how to respond. On one hand, the teacher has a serious responsibility to develop student competencies by instructing students on academic content. On the other hand, teachers must remember they are primarily teachers of young people, not teachers of content. In these situations, the teacher remains faithful to his or her responsibilities as a learning leader by:

- ▶ Listening carefully for the “hidden agenda” that may be behind a student question or comment
- ▶ Responding with appropriate sensitivity (maybe privately or even in class) to any indication in a student’s comments or manner that he or she is emotionally upset or in need
- ▶ Remaining informed and up-to-date about worldwide current events and those in the nation, local community, and school, especially those that may lead to fear, anxiety, or strong opinions among students
- ▶ Seizing teachable moments as they arise by momentarily putting aside the academic content especially when the teachable moment concerns issues of basic Christian values.

Most classroom environments will degenerate without a prepared and caring person to assertively lead the students. Some learning will still take place in almost any classroom, but the students in these situations will fall far short of attaining their full potential. The effective teacher must be a leader—someone who takes control of the environment and directs all facets of the environment to promote learning. When the teacher accepts this responsibility to lead, he or she is poised to meet the next expectation we have of ourselves as teachers in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart: that we expect ourselves to motivate students to learn.



Chapter Summary

Lead Classroom Learning

- Use time effectively
- Maintain eye contact
- Use non-verbal messages
- Give clear and precise directions
- Encourage legitimate questions
- Establish procedures for special requests
- Distribute and collect materials efficiently
- Remain flexible

Reflective Prayer

“You must be shining lamps unto all people by the practice of every virtue: a lively and practical faith, an unbounded and unfailing confidence, . . . the deepest humility. Continue, then, your work with courage and perseverance, rely always on the protection of the Lord. . . Your banner is the adorable Heart of Jesus; you must never forsake it . . . and I’m sure that you will succeed. Courage and Confidence—that’s my motto.”

(André Coindre, Founder of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart)



I received a letter today, Lord.

It was from a student I had years ago, a student who is now a teacher.

I remember her. She was somewhat quiet.

I often felt like she was trying to hide in the back of the room.

I always knew she was listening because of how alive her eyes seemed to be,
but I remember having to work hard to get her involved.

She always seemed satisfied to sit back and absorb what was going on.
In my head, I used to think of her as a sponge, just soaking everything up.

I talked with her about my concern. I worked hard to draw her out.

I was never quite sure if I was pushing too hard.

But many years have since passed,
and I really hadn’t thought about her again until today.

I received a letter today, Lord.

She thanked me for things I barely remember . . .

for the constant eye contact,

for not letting her hide,

for making sure every minute mattered,

for making the room feel warm and inviting,

for setting an example of treating each other with respect,

for making it easy to ask questions when she didn’t understand,

for helping her feel like she mattered.

She is a teacher now.

She says her goal is to be the kind of teacher I was.

Lord, I pray that that is the kind of teacher I still am.

Chapter 3

We Expect Ourselves To Motivate Students To Learn

An interesting question to consider seriously is, “Are we teaching if our students are not learning?” In other words, is it enough to be thoroughly prepared and lead quality instruction? The answer, we hope you agree, is “No!” What are preparation and instruction worth if students are not motivated to learn? Br. Regis Moccia is speaking of this need for teachers to be motivators of young people in the following comment:

The teacher is the spearhead, the instigator, and the stimulator. As a motivator of young people, the teacher has to devise ways and means of appealing to the universal mentality of the class.

—Br. Regis Moccia, S.C.

If Br. Regis’ comments are on target, an explicit expectation of ourselves as teachers should be that we motivate students to learn. This is not to deny the responsibility students have for their own learning. But the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart places a burden of responsibility on the shoulders of teachers to do whatever is reasonably possible to prevent students from failing. This includes explicit responsibility for motivating them to learn. Here are several practical examples of what we mean when we say we expect ourselves to motivate students to learn.

Diversifying Activities

A well-managed class is one that engages students in active learning through a variety of activities. The vast majority of students have an attention span that is shorter than 20 minutes. Multiple tasks can help keep students on task and allow them to use a variety of learning methods to develop the skill or acquire the concept that is being taught. Motivate your students and keep them on task in learning by:

- ▶ Diversifying activities—typically two or three each class period (using lecture, small group work, individual attention, whole class instruction, etc.) and intentionally using strategies (humor, anecdotes, etc.) to maintain student interest and to attend to the different learning styles and levels of students

- ▶ Attending to the affective and imaginative learning of students in designing assessments and in assigning grades
- ▶ Using varied assessment activities as opportunities for students to demonstrate what they have learned and as opportunities for them to assess their own knowledge and progress
- ▶ Keeping students engaged by questioning them by name and listening carefully to their input
- ▶ Making learning relevant to students' present and future lives
- ▶ Encouraging and providing opportunities for student choice
- ▶ Being on the lookout for sleeping or uninvolved students and immediately pulling them into the activity
- ▶ Expecting and requiring each student to participate to the best of his or her ability
- ▶ Intentionally limiting "Teacher Talk" and replacing it with various forms of active participation by students.

Bolstering Confidence

If the students feel that the teacher cares, students respond better, personally and academically.

—Sr. Jacqueline Crepeau, R.J.M.

If we acknowledge the full implications of Sr. Jacqueline's insight, it helps us realize the awesome responsibility that teachers have. Possibly the greatest single motivator of students to learn is the quality of their relationship with their teacher. If the student perceives the teacher as genuinely caring, he or she will more likely respond positively. In a similar way, if the student feels that the teacher believes in him or her and in his or her ability to learn, that student is more likely to be an achiever. The effective teacher, then, goes to great lengths to convey to students his or her genuine concern for them and confidence in their ability to succeed by:

- ▶ Explicitly encouraging and telling students they are capable of succeeding

- ▶ Conducting frequent evaluations of students' progress on small amounts of material to make their success more likely
- ▶ Carefully choosing instructional activities with the intent of providing every student with the reasonable opportunity for success
- ▶ Identifying areas of deficiency in students' learning and incorporating specific activities in lesson plans to help students make up for these deficiencies
- ▶ Designing assessment activities that reward consistent effort and diligence of students
- ▶ Providing a clear outline of materials to be tested
- ▶ Offering practical suggestions about successful study techniques
- ▶ Monitoring the level of difficulty and challenge of instructional activities to promote growth without creating unnecessary frustration
- ▶ Viewing excessive failures as a sign that instructional methods, testing procedures or grading policies are in need of evaluation.

The unfortunate reality is that some teachers take pride in their “tough” reputations. How much more effective would they be and how much truer to Catholic education in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart would they be if they took pride in a reputation of genuinely caring about students and their learning? Intentionally boosting the confidence of students is a powerful motivator for students and very consistent with the tradition within which we work.

Possibly the greatest single motivator of students to learn is the quality of their relationship with their teacher.

Providing Timely Feedback

I try to correct and get student work back to them as soon as possible . . . usually with positive comments.

—Ms. Mary Kedian

Most educational research shows that immediate feedback is necessary if it is to be effective. When we wait weeks to correct and return work to students, we are sending them the message that it is not important. We are also making it more difficult for them to learn from the feedback since their activity or test happened so long ago. Therefore, timely feedback is an important component in motivating students to learn. Effective teachers motivate students through feedback by:

- ▶ Staggering due dates for projects or tests in order to facilitate correcting and returning work
- ▶ Establishing a pattern of returning collected work that students can come to expect and count upon
- ▶ Providing written feedback in addition to reporting a numerical or alphabetical grade so the assessment will be a learning experience
- ▶ Making sure the feedback contains positive reinforcement
- ▶ Making sure the feedback includes specific suggestions for future work.

Accepting the responsibility to motivate students to learn means recognizing that teachers share in students' success or failure. It also means recognizing that grades are at best a secondary motivation. Effective teachers use many means other than grades to motivate students toward success. Not the least of these motivation methods is simply finding a way to disrupt unsuccessful patterns of student participation or preparation. This may be as simple as pulling a student aside for a private conversation as described in this quote from Br. Regis.

Some students may have a problem, whether it be hearing or seeing or where they are sitting, and that's where it is good, on a person-to-person basis, to handpick the students who seem to be mummies in your class and speak with them on the side. Ask, "What's going wrong?" rather than attack them. Then, perhaps, you may begin to understand the problem.

—Br. Regis Moccia, S.C.

In some cases, disrupting unsuccessful patterns may require more intense effort including consultations with guidance, conferences with parents, and referrals to disciplinarians. The important point is, however, that effective teachers accept the responsibility to motivate students to learn and use a wide variety of strategies and resources to accomplish that end.

Prepare well. Go into the classroom, be serious about it. Let the students know you want to be there and do this job, and you will do it. The result is the students improving themselves and preparing themselves for the future.

—Br. Maurus Bordelon, S.C.



Chapter Summary

Motivate Students to Learn

- Diversify activities
- Bolster confidence
- Provide timely feedback

Reflective Prayer

“Youths would come to disturb their instructions under cover of darkness in the badly lighted churches. This situation, far from distracting the missionaries, only served to galvanize them. Rare was the case in which the missionaries failed to win over the people after a few days or a week.”

André Coindre, 1820



Lord, that class was great today!

Every time I looked around, they were all alert and attentive.
Their hands shot up; their eyes were bright and alive.
I felt like we were all on the same wavelength.

At one point the discussion became so intense that it evolved without me.
I watched my kids interact, listen, respond.
There was such energy present. It startled me.
I wanted to interrupt, quiet them down, become their focus.
Then I realized that the learning had become their focus
and that was why there was such energy present.
I held my tongue; I listened.

Lord, it's funny, but I used to think that my leading and motivating students meant that I was the Master Teacher who stood in the front of the room and became the source of all that was important.

Today you reminded me, Lord, that if I am truly a motivator then the students will feed from my energy and eventually become motivators for each other.

Help me to remember, Lord, that your Spirit is always present in my classroom and that my job is to set it free.

Chapter 4

We Expect Ourselves To Work Collaboratively

One of the difficulties for new teachers at times is a sense of isolation. In some settings they may feel disconnected from other professionals. Though there may be hundreds of students and many other teachers close by, the new teacher may feel alone in facing the daunting challenges of teaching. Mr. Craig Martin explicitly addresses this issue.

I think teachers have a tendency to hold things in and not share them because they do not want to be looked at negatively. They don't want things they might share to be construed as a sign of weakness. I think it is a greater strength to admit that you're not really sure what you might do in a given situation. You're not really sure, perhaps, how to pace yourself. You're not really sure how much time to spend on a certain amount of material. All one needs to do is ask and learn from those people who are more experienced. Experience doesn't necessarily mean that you have all of the answers either, but at least a more experienced person has faced a similar situation a number of times. Maybe that person has some good advice.

—Mr. Craig Martin

Collaboration with other professionals is essential for effective instruction for new teachers and veterans alike. We should explicitly expect ourselves to collaborate as teachers. When we say that we expect ourselves to work collaboratively, here are some examples of what we mean.

Planning

No course should be taught in isolation. Each fills a niche in the school's curriculum. Each course develops skills that are introduced in previous courses and further enhanced in subsequent ones. Instruction is most effective when it takes into account this seamless whole of content and skills. That happens when teachers work collaboratively in planning by:

- ▶ Preparing daily instructional activities that are coordinated with the course syllabus and with the instructional activities of others teaching the same course
- ▶ Understanding clearly the particular skills students need to master in each course
- ▶ Understanding the relationship of the course with other courses in the discipline (thus, being an effective “team” player by contributing to the success of the overall curriculum)
- ▶ Recognizing the importance of meeting and even exceeding state and regional standards for achievement
- ▶ Reinforcing organizational skills, effective work and study habits, and oral and written communication skills that are taught across the curriculum.

Ensuring Supervision and Safety

Teachers’ responsibility for supervision of students and for their safety obviously exists in the classroom, but it extends beyond the classroom to many other areas and situations as well. Part of what we need to expect of ourselves is working collaboratively for appropriate supervision and safety of students by:

- ▶ Becoming familiar with the school’s safety plan, including procedures and escape routes
- ▶ Examining the work area for unsafe situations and making sure they are corrected
- ▶ Acting with serious calmness and following established procedures during any evacuation drill or actual emergency situation
- ▶ Promptly reporting to administrators anything that may compromise the safety or security of students
- ▶ Devoting total attention to supervising students when in a supervisory role

- ▶ Accepting the responsibility to supervise students at all times—while on duty or off duty, while chaperoning, at special events, between classes—in short, wherever students are found.

We are responsible for safety at all times and wherever our students may be found.

Pursuing Professional Development

Part of working collaboratively means sharing expertise, skills and techniques that will lead to our further professional development as teachers and ultimately to increased student achievement.

We don't teach as individuals; we teach as a community.

—Sr. Jacqueline Crepeau, R.J.M.

Accepting the fact that we teach as a community and that no one teacher has all the answers is actually a liberating experience. It relieves us of the burden of always having to have the answer or solution and makes available to us the collective

strength and wisdom of colleagues. This awareness is especially important for new teachers because they have so many things to

learn at once about their new setting. Mr. Craig Martin comments on this sometimes frightening aspect of the new teacher's experience:

Accepting the fact that we teach as a community and that no one teacher has all the answers is actually a liberating experience.

You have to get to know your school first. You have to get to know what are the common daily communications going on in the school among teachers, between teachers and students, and between teachers and administration. You also have to familiarize yourself with textbooks and courses, with what is expected on a daily basis, and you have to establish a rapport with students and colleagues. It is a tremendous amount of

responsibility all at once. The advice that I would give to new teachers is, 'Take it all in stride. Do not try to do everything at once.'

—Mr. Craig Martin

Working collaboratively to foster professional development and student achievement includes:

- ▶ Eating with colleagues for informal, authentic and spontaneous sharing of successes, concerns, advice and support
- ▶ Visiting other teachers' classrooms to witness and learn from master teachers at work
- ▶ Sharing teaching resources by letting other teachers know your effective techniques, lesson plans, assessments, and, likewise, being open to discovering new methods in the work of others
- ▶ Using the summer to reflect on what went well and what did not
- ▶ Offering your strengths to other teachers as a guest lecturer, team teacher, coach or mentor
- ▶ Seeking other teachers' strengths for your own benefit by knowing your limitations and using the resources of other faculty members to compensate for those limitations
- ▶ Learning what other teachers across grade levels and disciplines are teaching in order to know the full experience of your students...for example, a student's work in history class on the founding of the United States can enrich his or her learning in religion class about the development of the Catholic Church in America and in English class about the growth of American literature.



Chapter Summary

Work Collaboratively

- Plan with awareness of the entire curriculum
- Ensure supervision and safety
- Pursue professional development

Reflective Prayer

“Well then, our God needs soldiers who can endure the weariness of the day-to-day even more than he needs contemplatives who only honor him with their lips! Sword in hand, zeal for his glory, a desire to save, to teach, to edify one’s neighbor, that is what our God loves above all.”

(André Coindre, Founder of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart)



Lord, sometimes you ask too much of me.
I just want to teach.

I feel like I’m drowning in a sea of paperwork.

My schedule is filled with meetings that aren’t as meaningful
to me as they are meant to be.

I’m tired of the endless committees, goal-setting,
and new buzzwords which are supposed to inspire me.

They tire me, Lord.

It would be so much easier if I could just close the door and do my thing.
I want to teach...to touch the future...to open young minds.
I could do this, Lord, if only they would leave me alone.

But I am not alone; I am a part of something greater.
Remind me, Lord, that you’re not calling me to work by myself.
Refresh me so I can remember that this school as a whole is much greater
than the sum of its individual parts.

I am part of your body; I bring you to students more fully
when I work with others.
I am responsible to not just learn from my colleagues but to give to
them as well.
Together there is the strength of your mission,
of your vision.

Strengthen me, Lord.
I have a meeting I need to attend.

Chapter 5

We Expect Ourselves To Hold Students Accountable

For instruction to be effective, teachers must articulate and students must understand responsibilities. Students and teacher will share some responsibilities; some will rest with each individual. One of the most important responsibilities of teachers is holding students accountable for appropriate behavior. Doing so establishes order and respect in the classroom and maintains an environment where both the teacher and the students are prepared and motivated to grow and succeed.

Students need to know boundaries. They need to know what is appropriate to say, how to say it and how to accept others. It is important for a teacher to establish guidelines of learning, guidelines of behavior.

—Mr. Donald Hogue

When we say that we expect ourselves to hold students accountable, here are several practical examples of what we mean.

Enforcing Respect

Mutual respect ... teacher to student and student to teacher is necessary.

—Br. Clifford King, S.C.

A frequent observation of teachers today is that many young people display a lack of proper respect both in language and manners. It is as though they do not know better. Therefore, the first step in holding students accountable is insisting on respectful behavior at all times by:

- ▶ Enforcing school policies regarding appropriate dress and grooming

- ▶ Insisting on courteous, respectful language and avoidance of crude words and expressions (even those commonly used in modern culture and media)
- ▶ Articulating our own responsibilities as teachers in regard to respectful behavior
- ▶ Avoiding open criticism of colleagues or students
- ▶ Teaching proper posture and eye contact as forms of expressing respect
- ▶ Effectively correcting violations of respectful behavior including blurting out comments, put-downs of others, interrupting others, burping, etc.
- ▶ Intentionally teaching students to work with others, to understand directions and expectations and to acquire a sense of accountability for their work
- ▶ Maintaining a sense of order, cleanliness and pride in the classroom and insisting upon that behavior from students
- ▶ Modeling respect by saying, “Please” and “Thank you.”

Enforcing Classroom Rules and Proper Materials

Students who lack proper materials or books for class are potentially a serious problem. In some way you need to call their attention to their responsibility to be thoroughly prepared. You don't necessarily want to upset an entire class, but if you recognize the problem at the beginning of class, you might say, "Where are your materials? Go get them!" Or, if a student says that he left them at home, you may say, "All right. You don't have your notebook today. Make sure I see you tomorrow." Make sure that you do hold students accountable. Hold them responsible for consistent and thorough preparation.

—Mr. Craig Martin

The frustration of having plans for class sidetracked because students did not bring the proper materials (books, pencil, paper) is a constant problem when dealing with teenagers. You must let the students know that having their materials is a responsibility that you expect them to honor. The teacher must also be prepared and have the necessary materials if we expect the students to do the same.

There are a variety of ways to deal with this problem, but fairness and consistency have to be present in how we respond. Many teachers will not allow students to leave the room to get forgotten materials as it wastes too much class time and accommodates the students' lack of responsibility. These teachers may allow students to "look on" or participate in ways that they can. Some schools even have policies that prohibit students leaving class without supervision. However individual teachers respond to such situations, it is important that school policies be carefully followed and that students are held accountable for bringing all proper materials to class each day.

Regardless of the particular strategies employed, what is critical is that students consistently are held accountable for following rules and having proper materials and that they are handled in a fair and reasonable manner.

Teachers can achieve this goal by:

- ▶ Enforcing a "start of class" routine which includes students being in their assigned locations with all proper materials, ready to begin learning activities at the sound of the tone or bell
- ▶ Using a section of board space to indicate materials needed as well as homework for the next day's class and suggesting that students write down needed materials in their assignment pads
- ▶ Establishing and communicating consequences in advance for lack of preparation or appropriate materials
- ▶ Intervening promptly when a student fails to meet the standards of class work or homework (detaining students to complete unfinished assignments rather than lowering grades)

- ▶ Insisting upon thorough attentiveness, participation, and careful completion of assignments and homework
- ▶ Including students in the process of setting class rules since ownership of the rules will encourage adherence to them
- ▶ Emphasizing positive behavior (rather than a list of “don’ts”) in class rules
- ▶ Recognizing that there can be legitimate reasons for students not being prepared and speaking discreetly with students about these situations.

Make rules small in number but important, and show that you’re willing to allow freedom within those rules. However, once students have transgressed the rules, they need to be corrected. That works.

—Mr. Ed Powers

Correcting

When a structured learning environment exists in a classroom, the need for correction rarely arises. However, in even the best of classes, situations do arise that must be addressed. The goal of the teacher is to diffuse the situation as quickly and as quietly as possible. The longer a conflict continues, the harder it is to get students back on task. When the need for correction occurs, we hold students accountable by:

- ▶ Maintaining a calm, peaceful manner and being careful not to correct students when we are angry or in the heat of emotion
- ▶ Engaging in an honest, periodic self-assessment to ensure that motives for correction are clear and proper—the genuine benefit of the student corrected or the benefit of other students who may be negatively affected if no correction were given
- ▶ Sincerely praying for God’s guidance and for the positive outcome prior to initiating any correction

- ▶ Intentionally choosing the time and place to initiate a correction when the student is most disposed to receive the correction in a proper spirit
- ▶ Intentionally de-escalating a conflict (rather than escalating it) by deferring discussion of an incident whenever possible until after class and getting instruction re-started as soon as possible
- ▶ Always avoiding ridicule or embarrassment to students (such actions prompt students to respond inappropriately)
- ▶ Avoiding judging the student but rather emphasizing the behavior of the student.

In order to be effective in correcting students and effective in all phases of work with students, teachers should avoid relating in “too familiar” a manner. Acting in such a manner invariably becomes a point of confusion for students. It is better that they clearly understand that the teacher is an adult—not their peer—and that as an adult, the teacher has the responsibility and the authority to give direction and correction.

Discipline in a school is the responsibility of each teacher, not just the school disciplinarian.

—Mr. Edward Poirier

Handling Academic Dishonesty

Academic integrity has to be emphasized and reinforced. Dishonesty can take place in many different ways such as copying assignments or homework belonging to others, taking credit for a group assessment without contributing to the work, violating the integrity of testing situations by talking or accessing inappropriate information, and plagiarizing written work. An important way that we hold students accountable is preventing academic dishonesty and responding constructively to it when it occurs by:

- ▶ Being aware of and carefully following school policies regarding academic dishonesty
- ▶ Explicitly instructing students about academic dishonesty involving homework, tests, and research, and providing specific examples of what is objectionable and why

- ▶ Carefully designing rules regarding testing situations and explaining those rules in detail to students in advance
- ▶ Purposely constructing tests and assessments in such a manner as to make it difficult for students to be dishonest
- ▶ Using different versions of tests and assessments for different classes
- ▶ Planning special seating for testing situations and vigilantly proctoring to deter academic dishonesty and make incidents of it very rare
- ▶ Always remaining vigilant in the supervision of students, especially in testing situations
- ▶ While investigating the possibility of academic dishonesty, carefully respecting the dignity of students regardless of our personal feelings or impressions
- ▶ Speaking with a student one-on-one before taking any corrective action
- ▶ Explicitly and intentionally distinguishing between the objectionable behavior and the student who may have engaged in it
- ▶ Consulting with the student's counselor who can aid in working with the student
- ▶ Practicing academic honesty as a teacher by giving proper credit in the use of materials.

Making Referrals for Discipline

One of the most difficult decisions a teacher faces is removing a student from the classroom for disciplinary reasons. Many successful teachers report that this has happened rarely, if ever, in their classes. Other teachers have a reputation for “tossing” a student at the first sign of a problem in order to establish their authority in their classroom. The downside of this latter practice is that classroom behavior may become based on fear rather than cooperation, and the teacher may actually reduce his or her authority by transferring it to the school disciplinarian.

As was discussed earlier, the effective teacher works to establish a positive learning environment by promoting participation and respect. The goal is to have a classroom

to which students want to come, where they feel they belong and matter. When, in spite of these efforts, it becomes necessary to make a referral of a student for disciplinary reasons, we can continue to actively hold students accountable by:

The effective teacher knows to avoid power plays when students are unreachable. The effective teacher accepts the responsibility to maintain order and a learning environment based on respect.

- ▶ Interrupting the normal routine of the student in some fashion (such as a detention to complete work, referral to guidance, or a parent phone contact or conference) when the student fails to act or perform responsibly
- ▶ Sending the student to the appropriate school official for a disciplinary referral when other means of correction have proved ineffective
- ▶ Following up with the disciplinarian as soon as possible to provide additional information about the referral and to discuss additional action to be taken by each of the involved parties
- ▶ Meeting privately with the disciplinarian to discuss the student's behavior
- ▶ Meeting privately with the student later to discuss what occurred and plans for moving forward in a positive manner.

The reality, however, is that there will be rare times when a student refuses to respond appropriately, even if this refusal is only temporary. It might be due to something that happened at home; it may be because of a confrontation that occurred earlier in the school day. The effective teacher knows to avoid power plays when students are unreachable. The effective teacher accepts the responsibility to maintain order and a learning environment based on respect. In instances where a student's behavior or

language is directly opposed to that order, removing a student from the classroom becomes necessary.

In terms of witnessing and being a role model for students, the most important thing is respect for and sincere interest in the kids. If the kids can sense that you respect them as individuals and that you are sincerely interested in them, then the majority of the time, you will connect with them. Instead of telling the kids that they're noisy — “You guys need to shut up!”— if I can tell them I need them to be quiet, it works because they know I respect them, and they respect me.

—Mr. Guy Nelson



Chapter Summary

Hold Students Accountable

- Enforce Respect
- Enforce classroom rules and proper materials
- Correct in a respectful manner
- Prevent academic dishonesty
- Make referrals for discipline when necessary

Reflective Prayer

“(The Brothers) shall endeavor to keep their souls in peace, and free from the influence of passion, being careful not to correct the pupils when angry, or in a moment of excitement. They shall never punish from humor, caprice, revenge or from any other personal motive. The benefit of the child who has failed in his duty, or the good of the others who, if no punishment were inflicted, might be tempted to commit the same fault, are the only motives which should influence a Brother in correcting his pupils.”

(1928 *Rule of Life*, Brothers of the Sacred Heart p. 220)



Come with me today, Lord.

Walk with me in the halls and help me make eye contact and smile.

Help me remain vigilant as I proctor the test.

Sit by my side as I return phone calls and talk with upset parents.

Come with me today, Lord.

Stand in front of my classroom with me as I look at their faces.

Run with me as I try to get from my classroom to my supervision duty.

Lean on my doorway as I welcome them into my room.

Come with me today, Lord.

Whisper in my ear as I talk with the boy I caught cheating.

Help me stand tall as I supervise the locker room.

Keep your arm around my shoulder as I meet with the girl whose mom just died.

Come with me today, Lord.

I didn't sleep well last night and might be a little tired; I need your strength.

I'm anxious about being evaluated next week; I need your peace.

I don't have their tests corrected yet; I need your patience.

Come with me today, Lord.

I need your presence.

I need you.

Chapter 6

We Expect Ourselves To Provide Personal Attention to Students

I think you have to be ready to listen. I think you have to be there. I think you have to be able to see that the child needs you. That is a perception that a good teacher has that you almost sense when a child needs you for some reason, and you have to be ready, right then and there, to listen to the child. I think this is really what availability means. It means that you are there to help them when they need the help, that you're not too busy to listen to them and that you're not too busy to help them when they need it.

—Ms. Mary Kedian

Young people thrive on the personal attention of adults who care for them. No amount of planning, classroom leadership, collaboration, accountability or motivation can take the place of personal attention to students. Without the personal attention of a caring adult teacher, young people will simply not respond as completely. They will often underachieve and fail to reach their full academic, social, or personal development potential. With personal attention, they thrive. Here are several practical examples of what we mean when we say we expect ourselves to provide personal attention to students.

Knowing Them by Name

Getting to know students individually and by name, understanding their unique qualities, and recognizing their gifts, academic and otherwise, creates a caring learning environment. Order and control are much easier to maintain when students can see that you are aware of them and know who they are. The first steps in providing personal attention include:

- ▶ Learning and using students' first names as soon as possible
- ▶ Showing interest in students' activities outside of class

- ▶ Asking questions about students' interests
- ▶ Creating opportunities within and outside of class to listen to students' stories
- ▶ Taking the initiative to confer with students who are having difficulty or causing problems to better understand what student need is causing the behavior
- ▶ Learning important background or family information about each student
- ▶ Finding something to like about each individual student
- ▶ Making individual phone calls and writing brief individual notes to parents and students to say good things and recognize positive qualities of each student.

The importance of being willing to listen to students' stories cannot be overstated. Students need to know that we value them; part of that validation occurs when we give of our time, when we truly listen. Often we become so busy that we feel like kids are wasting our time by telling us trivial information. We need to understand that it is in our willingness to waste time listening that we establish the foundation of caring. They need to know that they matter. We need to listen actively, make eye contact, and ask questions that show we care without seeming to pry.

—Ms. Sue Tessier

Being Available

Providing personal attention also means being available. Students quickly recognize and avoid teachers who say they are available at a certain time but who display subtle irritation at the students' presence. These teachers may be technically available, but because they are not easily approachable, they are not truly accessible to the students. On the contrary, many students will seek out opportunities to associate with teachers outside of class when the

teacher conveys a sense of appreciation of the students' presence. Displaying personal attention through availability includes:

- ▶ Conveying in manner, tone of voice, eye contact and genuine attention paid to students a sense of approachability and accessibility
- ▶ Being an active listener by stopping other actions and turning toward an individual student when speaking with him or her
- ▶ Being physically present and accessible to students before or after class and school on a regular basis
- ▶ Taking advantage of opportunities to spend time (even brief moments) with students outside of class but within the school day
- ▶ Eating with students occasionally
- ▶ Reaching out in some special way to students at times of personal or family crisis.

Assigning Classroom Seating and Tasks

Many teachers use alphabetical order (and seating charts) from the first day of class to help them get to know the names of their students more quickly. Pure alphabetical seating, however, can become an impediment to learning if students who might have special academic needs are not given preferential seating in the front of the room. Students who are slight in stature should not be unable to see the teacher or the board because they are hidden behind a taller student. Once the teacher has learned the names of students, he or she may allow the students to then choose their own seats. Whatever specific seating strategies are chosen, the effective teacher recognizes that classroom seating arrangements and classroom tasks can actually be used as positive tools in providing personal attention to students. The effective teacher will provide personal attention through seating arrangements and a variety of classroom tasks by:

- ▶ Arranging student seating in such a way that promotes and maintains order in the classroom, clear sight lines from the teacher to every student, and the opportunity to quickly and efficiently take daily attendance

- ▶ Using seating arrangements as a way to nurture an individual student's interest and participation in class
- ▶ Accommodating special seating needs of individual students
- ▶ Recognizing that accommodating students with special needs does not mean lowering standards but rather accepting the uniqueness of each student
- ▶ Arranging special seating for testing in a way that will discourage the temptation to academic dishonesty
- ▶ Being careful that any change in seating arrangements for behavior reasons be done as unobtrusively as possible to avoid an opportunity for a student to be mocked or ridiculed
- ▶ Involving students in special classroom tasks such as cleaning the board, keeping time, recording key ideas from a day's lesson in a class log, leading the daily prayer, etc. as an additional way of providing individual attention
- ▶ Having a current seating chart available with a class roster for substitutes.

The purpose of arranging seats is to ensure student participation and success.

—Emily Terracina

Reaching Beyond the Classroom

A teacher's influence and responsibility extends beyond the classroom.

Every moment that a student is in school or involved in school-related events, his or her environment is influencing and forming, either promoting or detracting from positive learning. Therefore,

Education in the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart is holistic—opportunities to work with and interact with students outside of class extend the apostolate of Christian education and allow students to reach their full potential as individuals of character and faith.

teachers are guiding students as they coach sports, moderate extracurricular

activities, and attend school events. Education in the charism of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart is holistic—opportunities to work with and interact with students outside of class extend the apostolate of Christian education and allow students to reach their full potential as individuals of character and faith. Effective teachers, therefore, provide personal attention beyond the classroom by:

- ▶ Being alert to surroundings and happenings to maintain a safe, respectful experience for students
- ▶ Affirming and celebrating students' talents outside the classroom
- ▶ Explicitly acknowledging students and their activities
- ▶ Attending ball games, important student events and dances, and letting students know you are there and interested
- ▶ Using every opportunity to interact with students and guide them to act maturely, responsibly, and respectfully
- ▶ Being welcoming, hospitable and available to students and colleagues.

I think several of the more effective teachers or successful teachers that I have seen are those who really take a personal interest in their students' concerns. They are willing to take a little extra time whether it be at break or after school or in the morning. They are willing to make themselves available to talk to a student with a level of respect commensurate with an adult, not to talk down to them in a condescending sense. They are willing to show genuine interest and to follow it up even if not asked.

– Mr. Craig Martin



Chapter Summary

Personal Attention

- Know students by name
- Be available
- Use classroom seating to meet individual needs
- Reach beyond the classroom

Reflective Prayer

“In our tradition, we view being with the young as privileged opportunities to show expressions of concern, encouragement, and love. We see availability as a witness to the compassionate love of Christ. It is an active presence, which requires accessibility and approachability. Availability provides the opportunity for accompaniment, support, and vigilance.”

(The Educational Charism of the United States Provinces of the
Brothers of the Sacred Heart)



Lord, I really have a hard time with that kid.
It's as if he knows exactly which buttons to push.
Sometimes I dread going into that class just because I know he'll be there.

He's pretty good at it, Lord.
He knows how to stop right before crossing the line.
I find myself at the point where I'm hoping he'll go one step further
so that I can really come down on him.
I secretly hope he'll misbehave early so I can throw him out of class.
My mood actually improves whenever he is absent.

I know I am supposed to love him, Lord.

And respect him.
And reach out to him.
And see him as one of your children.

It's hard, Lord.

Help me to see him with your eyes,
Hear him with your ears,
Speak to him with your words.

Remind me, Lord, that you are present in him, too.

Chapter 7

We Expect Ourselves To Advocate Gospel Values Unequivocally

The tradition within which we work calls us to be no less than ministers of the Gospel—men and women whose every interaction with young people spreads the Good News of God’s presence in this world and his promise of eternal life. This spiritual dimension is such a constitutive element of the work of educating young people in this tradition that it rightfully can be considered a calling, a vocation. Br. Brian Curry speaks to this aspect of a teacher’s role:

A teacher has to be well grounded in the role he or she plays in the life of the student. If you think about it, the teacher is one of the most important people in the life of the student. And, the relationship, if it works, has probably the most long-range effects in the life of the student.

So, I think a teacher really has to see himself or herself as a minister who helps the person and who has been given the privilege of helping a person develop his/her educational qualities and potential.

—Br. Brian Curry, S.C.

When we say that we expect ourselves to advocate Gospel values unequivocally, here are some practical examples of what we mean.

Praying

Praying with students in the classroom environment provides teachers with frequent and influential opportunities to advocate Gospel values. Whether traditional, teacher-composed, student-composed or spontaneous, daily classroom prayer provides an opportunity for the teacher to witness to the Gospel in such a way that it becomes routine, begun from day one—in a sense, like the air students breathe—and thus it nurtures and forms them. Effective teachers unequivocally advocate Gospel values through prayer by:

- ▶ Using daily class prayer to help establish an atmosphere of caring and respect

- ▶ Including a variety of prayer forms in the class prayer experience such as offering personal intentions, opportunities for brief guided reflection, as well as traditional prayers and teacher- and student-composed prayers
- ▶ Deliberately emphasizing prayers of praise and thanksgiving so that students' experience is not limited to prayers of supplication
- ▶ Setting a tone at the beginning of each class period to communicate that God holds us in His loving sight and is present to us in our families, colleagues and especially in our students
- ▶ Structuring daily prayer experiences that help students confront their own limits and transcend themselves and their social conditioning
- ▶ Allowing and inviting students to take an active role, with direction and assistance from the teacher, in shaping and leading class prayer
- ▶ Including events from the school and community in classroom prayer.

Referring to the Gospel

Acquiring the habit of making explicit references to the Gospel is another powerful way of promoting Gospel values. Doing so can subtly form students, making them more receptive to the Gospel in their future lives by showing them that the Gospel is a source of insight and wisdom that can be of practical assistance in guiding life decisions. Teachers can advocate Gospel values intentionally by:

- ▶ Becoming personally familiar with specific Gospel passages that speak to basic values such as the dignity of each individual and solidarity with those who are poor
- ▶ Carefully selecting certain current events of interest or importance to the students to discuss briefly and prayerfully in class

- ▶ Encouraging students to critically examine our culture and secular values in light of the Gospel
- ▶ Explicitly sharing our conviction as Christians that the Gospel is a source of insight and wisdom that challenges us to be counter-cultural and even to examine our individual values, attitudes and actions.

Promoting Catholic Social Teaching

The Catholic Church has a strong tradition of social teaching that is grounded solidly in the Gospel. Unfortunately, Catholic social teaching is not widely known in our culture. One important way of advocating Gospel values is to know and consciously support Catholic social teaching as a part of instructing, forming and witnessing to young people.

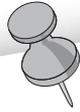
Catholic social teaching is much too extensive to be covered fully in this text. However, it is possible to articulate in a succinct form the major themes of Catholic social teaching. These major themes include the following: 1) Respect for Life and the Dignity of the Human Person; 2) Recognition of the Rights and Responsibilities of All Persons; 3) Promotion of Family, Community, and the Common Good; 4) Respect for the Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers; 5) Preferential Care for the Poor and Vulnerable; 6) A Call to Peacemaking and Recognition of Solidarity of All Humans; and 7) Respect and Care for God's Creation.

Teachers can intentionally advocate Gospel values through a focus on Catholic social teaching by:

- ▶ Explicitly referring to the sacredness of each person as made in the image and likeness of God
- ▶ Emphasizing the importance of people over material things and the priority of “being” over “having”
- ▶ Applying that priority to the care for those who are weakest and most vulnerable
- ▶ Explaining the Catholic position that human life is sacred from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death

- ▶ Discussing abortion, euthanasia, war, torture, poverty, capital punishment and hunger as evils that deprive people of their sacred lives
- ▶ Promoting the good of family life and the stability of families
- ▶ Explaining the social and communal nature of human life and the responsibilities to others in community that we all share
- ▶ Acknowledging that private property is a right, but asserting the higher right that all humans have to life, food, shelter and health care
- ▶ Recognizing the right that all people have to participate in decisions that affect their lives
- ▶ Recognizing the right of all people to a means of support through productive work, fair wages, ownership of property and opportunity for economic advancement
- ▶ Praying for and working for peace and justice in our local communities, country and world.
- ▶ Suggesting alternatives to violence and conflict as means of handling disagreements and conflicts
- ▶ Exploring ways that we can individually and communally be better stewards of the resources of God's creation
- ▶ Witnessing to students through full and constructive participation in service opportunities directed toward those who are materially poor or otherwise in great need.

The Brothers of the Sacred Heart was founded in a compassionate response to the needs of young people in Lyons, France, in 1821. This compassion, a preference for those who are poor and vulnerable and a spirituality centered on the Heart of Jesus and thus on those who are suffering, has always been a part of this tradition. As teachers in this tradition, we must remain faithful to advocating Gospel values through a firm commitment to Catholic social teachings.



Chapter Summary

Advocate Gospel Values Unequivocally

- Create a prayerful classroom
- Proclaim the Gospel
- Promote Catholic social teaching

Reflective Prayer

“Alas! Without doubt, there will always be some uncertainty to keep you on the alert, to keep you from complacency or indifference, but this concern must not discourage you or leave you faint-hearted. When we do all that we can, we do all that we must.”

(André Coindre, Founder of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart)



Lord, I open my heart to you today.

I want to see you in everyone I meet.
I want to hear your voice in my conversations.
I want to feel your hand on my shoulder.

I need to get closer to you, Lord.
I keep finding reasons why I don't have time to pray.
I promise myself I'll read scripture but then never get to it.
I plan on using your life as an example in my teaching and then forget.

I know how important it is, Lord, to spend time with you...
to reflect on your words...
to revisit your time with the apostles...
to share my hopes and dreams, fears and failings.
I know all these things, Lord.
I just need to start doing them.

Stay with me, Lord, as I try again to live in you.
Be patient with me.
I know that you are waiting for me to return to you more fully.

Lord, I open my heart to you today.

Chapter 8

We Expect Ourselves To Live and Act as Responsible People

One of the things that I do at the beginning of my year is I pass out a sheet of paper that says the “Ten Behavioral Commandments of This Class.” And what it is—it’s just helping students to realize that we are people in this class and we have to treat each other with civility. We have to treat each other with politeness and with respect. And so there are things like, “I will make eye contact with whomever is speaking. I will not interrupt. I will raise my hand. I will volunteer.”

So, it makes them more accountable or at least it makes them understand what I expect from them in the classroom—that they are active learners, not passive learners. I also expect that they are respectful of others, open to new ideas and differences of opinion, and that they become comfortable, or at least willing, to share their opinions. So that is how I begin.

—Mr. Don Hogue

Young people are extraordinarily quick to recognize discrepancies between espoused values and actual practice. Our efforts to advocate Gospel values will bear no fruit if we are not credible witnesses to them. However, they will be powerfully moved toward faith if they see their teachers as living and acting with integrity daily. When we say we expect ourselves to live and act as responsible people, here are some specific examples of what we mean.

Being Respectful

Demonstrating consistent respect for students is essential if we are to be perceived by students as men and women who are living and acting responsibly. Further, teachers who are perceived as respectful have fewer behavior problems from students. We demonstrate respect in how we live and act by:

- ▶ Avoiding speaking negatively about students except in a confidential and professional setting for a constructive purpose
- ▶ Consistently cultivating a sense of fairness in all interactions with students
- ▶ Being consistent and dependable in mood and disposition as opposed to having unpredictable moods, reactions and expectations
- ▶ Being thoroughly prepared each day and not attempting to “fake” the way through instruction or questions
- ▶ Understanding that happiness and a love of learning are contagious and consistently acting in ways that encourage it
- ▶ Congratulating students when they do things well and commiserating with them and supporting them when things are not going well.

There are few things that cause teens to mistrust adults more than their believing that we are unfair. As adults, we have learned that life isn't fair, and though we would like it to be, we have no false hopes that it will be. Young people, on the other hand, are just beginning to learn this reality. Just because life is not fair, however, doesn't mean that we shouldn't try to be. Invariably, there will be some students with whom we enjoy working more than others. There will be some who can *push our buttons* just by walking into our classrooms. There should never be times, though, when this feeling affects the respect with which we treat them or the manner in which we grade them. Living and acting responsibly means that they know we care about **all** of them, not some of them.

Handling Stress, Frustration and Conflict

How teachers handle difficult situations, such as when they are under stress, frustrated or in conflict, speaks worlds to students about their true values. Students will observe teachers closely to see if they, in fact, act respectfully in the most difficult situations they face. Therefore, situations involving stress, frustration or conflicts are unique opportunities to witness the Gospel most

effectively to students. Living and acting responsibly requires that teachers handle stress, frustration and conflicts by:

- ▶ Examining and working to appropriately adjust personal tendencies for handling stress, frustration and conflict
- ▶ Striving to be calm, respectful, and genuinely caring especially at times of personal stress, conflict or frustration
- ▶ Deliberately slowing down or deferring until a later time any visible or audible reaction to difficult situations to ensure a more disciplined and measured response
- ▶ Refraining from imposing correction or negative consequences for students while emotionally involved or upset
- ▶ Consciously analyzing difficult situations to identify strategies for de-escalating conflict, such as avoiding ultimatums or threats, allowing students to “save face” or avoid humiliation whenever possible, and taking the minimum corrective intervention needed to regain control and focus of the class for instruction
- ▶ Explicitly teaching students similar strategies for avoiding escalation of conflicts whether these are with peers or adults.

Pursuing Personal Growth

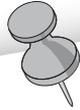
As the world changes, teachers must change and grow with it by continuing to learn themselves. A master teacher is a lifelong learner, one who models to students a desire and method for learning and one who remains current in content area advancements and in teaching techniques. As a result, an important way to demonstrate responsible living and acting in the school environment is pursuing continued personal and professional growth by:

Therefore, situations involving stress, frustration or conflicts are unique opportunities to witness the Gospel most effectively to students.

- ▶ Attending conferences on subject area content and on the profession of teaching
- ▶ Consciously cultivating an awareness of new developments both in content area and teaching philosophies and methods
- ▶ Subscribing to and reading professional journals
- ▶ Seeking teacher certification
- ▶ Joining professional organizations and taking advantage of the classes and services offered for increased professional growth
- ▶ Continuing to take college or graduate level courses
- ▶ Using vacation and travel as opportunities to participate in new life experiences
- ▶ Identifying and pursuing your own intellectual interests and hobbies
- ▶ Observing and sharing in the practices of other teachers.

I think each and every year you have to take it upon yourself to grow. I feel that by not growing you become stagnant in a way. So what you have to do is take an initiative that every year you go out and search out taking classes, belonging to organizations or reading magazines. There are lots of ways of growing other than going back to school. But it's up to you to do that—to actually take an initiative, to go out and search out, reading what's new out there, talking to other people, getting involved.

—Ms. Cathy Sarkozy



Chapter Summary

Live and Act as Responsible People

- Be respectful at all times
- Handle stress, frustration and conflict as opportunities to witness
- Pursue personal growth

Reflective Prayer

“Each and every student is known, valued, treasured, and taught in partnership with the family. Hospitality, availability, personal interest, and concern for others are hallmarks of this charism. We emphasize the formation of the whole person, traditional values, high expectations, self-discipline, fairness, professional competence, and collaboration. The respect, kindness, and concern which flow from the charism are signs within the school of the compassion of Christ.”

(The Educational Charism of the United States Provinces of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart)



Help me to grow, Lord.

Remind me that just because I've gotten a little older,

and, hopefully, a lot wiser,
that there is still much for me to learn.

Sometimes when the principal puts those handouts in my mailbox,
I actually cringe when I see them.

Instead of seeing them as a challenge for my growth,
I see them as a reprimand for not doing enough.
Will it ever be enough, Lord?

After all, I know what I'm doing.
I read professional journals.
I talk with my colleagues.

I attend conferences.

I feel like they're just trying to reinvent the wheel.

I like my wheel the way it is, Lord.

I need to remember that change is a good thing.
It is a sign of your Spirit bringing life.
It is an opportunity for me to share and grow.
Change means you are present.

Reawaken my sense of urgency,
my need to grow and to become.

Help me to grow, Lord.

Chapter 9

We Expect Ourselves To Witness Honesty

Part of honesty is humbly acknowledging that our perspective is not the only valid one. Students' personal circumstances may so alter their perspective as to make it substantially different from our own. Honesty calls us to acknowledge the validity of these different perspectives while holding firmly to the perspective that advances our mission.

When we say we expect ourselves to witness honesty, here are some practical examples of what we mean.

Acknowledging Mistakes

We teachers are not accident free, not error free. We sometimes make mistakes and so we have to acknowledge that. "Yes, that is correct. I was wrong." And so if we are open to the possibility of making a mistake and open to correcting it, this is another way of giving an example to the students, of learning to correct mistakes.

—Br. Donald Tardif, S.C.

Some teachers may operate unreflectively under an incorrect assumption that an admission of mistakes to their students would undercut their authority and credibility. In

fact, this is not

true. Of course,

they should strive

through meticulous

preparation to make

mistakes as rare as possible. But they will occur. When mistakes do occur, they give teachers the opportunity to witness honesty without diminishing their stature or effectiveness in the eyes of the students. Effective teachers will witness honesty by:

When mistakes do occur, they give teachers the opportunity to witness honesty without diminishing their stature or effectiveness in the eyes of the students.

► Being willing to admit to and correct a mistake when necessary

- ▶ Developing a reputation as a “fair” tester and grader
- ▶ Adjusting instructional decisions when presented with reasonable evidence that fairness calls for such an adjustment
- ▶ Welcoming student input on scheduling of assignments and tests to avoid overlap with other teachers’ assignments and tests
- ▶ Intentionally looking for evidence (such as frequent errors on a particular item or group of test items) that indicates that instruction may have been inadequate or directions unclear
- ▶ Acknowledging that we teachers share in responsibility for students’ successes and failures
- ▶ Reflecting on the question, “How could I have better prepared students?” rather than immediately blaming students for poor performance or parents for lack of support and supervision.

Communicating Effectively

Good communication is critical to the success of students. Unfortunately, if communication between the teacher and students and between the teacher and parents is not consistently good, parents and students alike may perceive it as a form of dishonesty. Any time a student says, “You didn’t tell us that material was included on the test” or any time a parent says, “I didn’t know the problem was that serious,” the unspoken implication is that there was a lack of honesty in the communication.

I communicate as soon as there’s an academic concern or behavior problem. I use notes, forms, and phone calls. I have parents sign tests and quizzes with low grades.

—Ms. Denise Turcotte

Working at effective communication needs to be a priority. The effective teacher witnesses honesty through communication by:

- ▶ Intentionally cultivating a sense of accessibility and helpful cooperation with parents

- ▶ Fostering open lines of communication with parents by letting them know when and how to make contact
- ▶ Making the commitment to be absolutely faithful to returning phone calls within 24 hours
- ▶ Carefully planning what to communicate by basing communication on observation of student behavior and performance rather than upon personal judgments about a student's character
- ▶ Carefully planning the purpose of communication (Precisely what do you want the student or parent to do following the communication?)
- ▶ Providing information and feedback in a timely manner for the purpose of promoting improvement
- ▶ Offering specific suggestions to parents, students and colleagues about how to resolve difficult situations and improve deficiencies
- ▶ Adopting a consistent format and frequency for communication so that students and parents can come to expect the type and frequency of feedback
- ▶ Sharing negative feedback with the appropriate parties at the appropriate times (and being conscientious about not sharing negative comments with others)
- ▶ Honoring students' reputations by protecting confidentiality in faculty rooms
- ▶ Intentionally providing recognition, praise and other forms of positive feedback on a regular basis.

Faculty rooms are great places to eat, great places to have a cup of coffee. But when it comes to students, when it comes to their grades, when it comes to any comment about them, the faculty room is not the place to discuss anything. If some comment has to do with a parent or a child, then that is whom you talk to. If it has something to do with another teacher and a student, then you talk to them in private.

—Ms. Cathy Sarkozy

Empathizing with Students

There are several qualities, certainly, that are important for a teacher to be effective. One is understanding. We need to understand the particular position that a student takes, maybe give some consideration to what it is that they might have been experiencing recently, any problems that they might be going through, conflicts that need resolution. Although we look at them and expect a great number of things from them, it is more important to understand that they are still 16, 17 years old. Many things that are important to them affect their lives. In terms of us being effective, I think it is also important for us to listen, to listen to what they have to say, to listen to their concerns and take them into account as we construct an activity or class. We need to be very intentional in how we lead class discussions, how we present ideas and incorporate them so that students have a sense of belonging, a sense of participation in class.

—Mr. Craig Martin

Implicit in any teacher-student relationship is the expectation of understanding. The adult is given authority and responsibility for the development of the young person in a way that can happen only if there exists a level of trust and understanding in the relationship between teacher and student. In Catholic education in general and in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, the role of understanding and trust is even more critical. Only with the cultivation of such understanding and trust can the mission of education in the tradition of the Brothers be successful. To claim to work for the holistic development of young people and to fail to seek understanding and even empathy with their experience would be a blatantly dishonest approach. Therefore, effective teachers in this tradition positively witness honesty by empathizing with students and by:

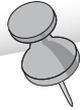
- ▶ Listening and wanting to hear the truth in each situation
- ▶ Striving to understand the student's perspective even if it is flawed

- ▶ Knowing that unique situations in a student's life might explain (not excuse) irresponsible behavior or lack of achievement
- ▶ Using knowledge of such unique situations in students' lives to adjust a personal approach and plan for managing each student individually
- ▶ Cultivating a sense of belonging in the classroom community for each individual student
- ▶ Reaching out in deliberate ways to those students who are not accepted readily or completely
- ▶ Committing ourselves to the belief that every student can succeed and deserves to experience success in our environment.

We can't quickly conclude that this is not the place for students who do not seem to fit in. Rather, we should assume that this is the place for them. Our charism compels us to work diligently for the success of each student, even those who are most difficult.

—Br. Clifford King, S.C.

Clearly, witnessing honesty goes far beyond not telling lies or deliberately misleading others. It includes acknowledging in humility our mistakes and inadequacies. It includes communicating effectively in a timely and caring manner so that others can accept and act upon their appropriate responsibilities. Finally, it includes a willingness to empathize with students so we genuinely understand things from their perspective and can adjust our efforts in ways that will produce a better response.



Chapter Summary

Witness Honesty

- Acknowledge mistakes
- Communicate consistently and effectively
- Empathize with students

Reflective Prayer

“It is true that things are not perfect. But the Lord alone is perfect, and even his works, however glorious, lie always on the edge of the abyss. God took six days to create the world and disentangle the chaos . . . to teach us that it takes time to achieve anything worthwhile, and that things never go as well in their infancy as when they attain full maturity. How many spring blossoms produce no fruit at all! The sower must content himself with the harvest which God sends him, even if it is not as good as the one he had hoped for, and even if it means that he has to content himself with the barest essentials.”

(André Coindre, Founder of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart)



Thank you, Lord, for today.

Thank you for the opportunities you gave me.
For the kids in my classes that I was able to reach.
For the kids in my classes with whom I'm still trying to connect.

Thank you for the courage to be myself.
I had been nervous about the outburst I had yesterday.
When I talked about it with my 3rd period class,
I felt like it was ok, they understood;
They let me be human, too.
It's reassuring to know that I don't have to be perfect.

Thank you for the freedom I feel to be myself with them.
I used to feel like I had to pretend; that I was on a stage.
I felt like I was a great pretender
so I had to put on this act to impress my colleagues
and to prove to my students that I was in charge.

I know now that you just want me to be myself.
You want me to allow them to be themselves, too.

Thank you for the gift of teaching, Lord.
I know it is a gift.
I look to you as my Master Teacher.

Chapter 10

We Expect Ourselves To Be Caring and Compassionate

Students always make a connection with a teacher who takes a personal interest in them or who shows them something about what it means to be a good human being as well as a good professional teacher.

—Mr. Don Hogue

The words “caring” and “compassion” usually connote willingness to make special efforts to accommodate another. To some, these words may suggest lowering standards in order to allow another person to more easily meet expectations. In fact, being caring and compassionate is not incompatible with setting high standards and expectations. Rather, being truly caring and compassionate can be accomplished only by maintaining high standards and expectations of our students and ourselves. Being caring and compassionate does not mean being “soft.” Ultimately, it means acting in a way that brings about the best possible development of others. Therefore, when we say we expect ourselves to be caring and compassionate, here are several practical examples of what we mean.

Understanding the Adult Role

Teenagers need adults to accept the role of adults in order for them to develop properly. The mistake some beginning teachers make is trying to build a relationship with students that is based too much on students liking them and even having fun with them. In a superficial way this seems to be a very sympathetic and caring approach. However, it is an approach built upon a mistaken assumption that it is possible and desirable for teachers to be students’ peers. In fact, appropriate caring and compassion toward students can only be accomplished when the teacher clearly understands his or her adult role and accepts it fully. Thus, effective teachers demonstrate caring and compassion through their role as adults directing the formation of young people by:

- ▶ Consistently expecting students to refer to them by title such as “Mr.,” “Mrs.,” “Ms.,” or “Brother”

- ▶ Not allowing students to “cross the line” and treat teachers like peers
- ▶ Recognizing and being willing to peacefully tolerate young people being upset with decisions, corrections and expectations
- ▶ Being a consistent, solid presence that students can push against, complain about and at times even rebel against but one that they can ultimately depend upon
- ▶ Taking initiative to improve an undesirable situation or reaching out to re-establish rapport rather than waiting for the other person (or student) to take initiative
- ▶ Believing in the power and influence for good of being an adult instructor, former and witness to young people—believing that teachers are “power-full” without needing to flaunt power as a way to promote ego
- ▶ Understanding that compassion need not be “soft”; caring need not be the same as “giving in.”

An effective teacher seeks a relationship with students based on respect and trust. A relationship between a student and a teacher is not a friendship between peers. The relationship is based on each person understanding his or her role and knowing that, even though there are parameters, the relationship is sacred and founded in God’s love.

Setting High Expectations

Believing firmly in the great capacity of young people to achieve, learn and grow is a way of showing them appropriate respect. And believing that they are incapable or that they are not willing to achieve is a form of giving up on them; this latter belief can hardly be considered compassionate. So, the effective teacher demonstrates caring and compassion to students through setting high expectations by:

- ▶ Consistently enforcing reasonable expectations and not allowing students “to slide” or “cut corners”

- ▶ Being conscientious about not cutting corners ourselves
- ▶ Requiring respect at all times
- ▶ Taking the time to correct students whenever necessary, whether in class or on duty or not
- ▶ Cultivating a style of correction that explains but does not seek approval
- ▶ Articulating for young people what is expected and why it is expected
- ▶ Expressing consistent confidence in young people
- ▶ Being willing to articulate these expectations patiently over and over again.

Cultivating a Spirituality of Compassion

Of course it is true that compassion is about much more than simply acting as an adult and setting high expectations. Compassion also includes the sensitivity to recognize the suffering of others and the willingness, to the extent possible,

to alleviate that suffering. In the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, compassion goes beyond even this

A spirituality of compassion calls us to recognize the suffering of our students as an expression of the wounded heart of Jesus and to act to alleviate that suffering as a part of our response in faith to God's presence in them.

scope. It is a part of the spirituality that is the very underpinning of all apostolic activity. A spirituality of compassion calls us to recognize the suffering of our students as an expression of the wounded heart of Jesus and to act to alleviate that suffering as a part of our response in faith to God's presence in them. The effective teacher in this tradition, therefore, demonstrates caring and compassion through a spirituality of compassion by:

- ▶ Wanting genuinely to help students (not just going through the motions)

- ▶ Communicating explicitly and implicitly our availability to students
- ▶ Seeking to recognize in students the suffering in their family life, in their relationships with peers or wherever suffering is found
- ▶ Allowing the suffering of students to become a routine part of our prayer lives
- ▶ Striving to be “Jesus” to those students in their suffering
- ▶ Never allowing our own “suffering” or life issues to become an excuse for failing to reach out with compassion to students in need
- ▶ Recognizing we are called to be “Wounded Healers” of others.

Students must see in us a love of self, a love of learning and a love for them. They should feel through us the love emanating from the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The trust that results from this love allows us to get to know our students better so that we can better serve their individual needs.

Do make sure your students know that you love them, appreciate them. You should say it more importantly by your actions in taking time to be with them, to do things for them – outside of class as well as in. Don’t take it for granted that students know you enjoy having them in class. Tell them. You’ll be surprised how happy it can make students feel. Let the students know that you pray for them as a class and as individuals.

—*Tips for Discipline*, New Orleans Province of Brothers of the Sacred Heart, August 1978



Chapter Summary

Be Caring and Compassionate

- Understand the adult role
- Set high expectations
- Cultivate a spirituality of compassion

Reflective Prayer

“Compassion is the quality of presence which causes the person who is in trouble to feel less alone and to take courage.” (Jean Vanier)

“You are suffering: well then! All the better! You are walking in the footsteps of the apostles who had to undergo much adversity, of the martyrs who shed their blood, and of Jesus Christ who entered into his glory amid denials, humiliations, and pain.” (André Coindre)



I feel really bad for that kid, Lord.

I used to think she was just lazy.
I was on her case because she didn't seem to care.
I thought I was helping her by staying on her all the time.
I told her she had a poor attitude towards authority
and she needed to be more respectful.

I didn't know, Lord.

No one told me.

I didn't think to ask.

Sometimes, there are just so many of them
it's impossible to check on them all.

Now I find out that her father hits her and her mom's an alcoholic.
She actually takes care of her two younger sisters.
She's absent a lot because she's trying to hide the bruises.
She has a poor attitude because she's both afraid and angry.
She didn't need for me to be on her case, Lord,
She does need me to be on her side.

Help me, Lord, to see past what they do.
Help me to remember that their actions don't always reflect their hearts,
but instead reflect their hurts.

I'm going to be there for her, Lord.
I'm going to show her that there are adults who care.
I'm going to make sure she knows that someone cares.
I care, Lord.

Chapter 11

We Expect Ourselves To Hold Strong Convictions Founded in the Gospel

You have to want to teach, enjoy what you're doing and care about kids, have a sense of humor about both yourself and the kids. Know your material.

—Ms. Denise Turcotte

There is room for a vast diversity of opinions and even convictions among those who work faithfully in the educational tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. After all, we are individuals willingly coming together for a shared mission, not clones of one another. Yet, shared convictions in two areas are critical to our success. These must be held firmly by all those who claim a part of the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Both are founded and firmly rooted in the Gospel. The first concerns our deepest conviction about ourselves. The second concerns our deepest conviction about our students.

Teaching is Ministry

One of the essential convictions founded in the Gospel that we must share is that our work and all of our efforts go beyond professionalism and methodology. Professionalism is not sufficient to achieve the greatness of the mission to which we are called. The work that we are about is nothing less than the evangelization of young people. It is the work of the church to share the fullness of life offered by Jesus in ways that young people relate to, understand and accept. It is a work in which we share through our baptism and it is, in the truest sense, ministry.

The ideal teacher in our tradition is not looking first to financial gain. Rather, his or her first concern is dedication to education—to the feeling that as a teacher he or she is contributing in a great way to the formation of these young people and inculcating into them things that are going to be so useful in their later lives. Dedication is even more important than education.

—Br. Martin Hernandez, S.C.

Effective teachers in this tradition, therefore, hold to the conviction that teaching is ministry by:

- ▶ Believing passionately in basic Gospel values such as the dignity and sanctity of each individual
- ▶ Being willing to make personal sacrifice (possibly of convenience or time) in order to witness respect for others
- ▶ Being dedicated to the formation and education of young people
- ▶ Recognizing the serious responsibility to make the Good News of Jesus recognizable and credible to young people
- ▶ Actively embracing the role of one responsible for spreading the Gospel.

Teaching is a vocation, not just a profession. It is going to demand the whole self and not just whether or not you are going to get so many hours in and you are paid to cover this material and that it is all you do. But it is more of a calling... to be a teacher involves your whole person. It is all your gifts intertwined on a daily basis in a personal way.

— Mr. Don Hogue

Adopting a Pedagogy of Trust

A second and most important conviction that we must share as ministers in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart is an unflinching belief in the goodness of each individual. As a basic tenet of our faith, we believe that each person is loved and redeemed by God.

Of course, daily life offers many examples of people who choose to do wrong and even embrace evil in one form or another. Such experience, whether in the form of crime statistics read in the newspaper or direct experience of student misbehavior in a classroom, can easily lead us to a jaded perspective. We may be tempted to hedge our belief in the goodness of each individual by acting in ways that subtly compromise that belief.

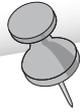
Ministers in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, however, are called upon to maintain the firm conviction in the basic goodness of each person and to adopt classroom policies, actions and a personal style

that effectively reinforce that conviction and communicate it to their students. Such a conviction in the goodness of students need not naively ignore the possibility of wrongdoing. Rather, a consistent conviction in the goodness of students is a creative and redemptive intervention that makes their lives fuller and the realization of their potential more probable. It is an approach to teaching and forming students that can truly be called a “pedagogy of trust.”

Ministers in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, however, are called upon to maintain the firm conviction in the basic goodness of each person and to adopt classroom policies, actions, and a personal style that effectively reinforce that conviction and communicate it to their students.

Ministers in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart practice a pedagogy of trust by:

- ▶ Believing in the goodness and potential of each student
- ▶ Maintaining hope and belief in the potential of each student to grow and develop despite past failures or lack of cooperation
- ▶ Actively seeking opportunities to re-establish a friendly rapport with students following any correction
- ▶ Preferring to miss the opportunity to correct a student for wrongdoing rather than unjustly accusing a student
- ▶ Designing classroom rules and procedures that maintain control and order but also communicate a sense of trust and respect for the dignity of each student
- ▶ Always protecting students from any form of peer or adult harassment
- ▶ Reaching out to those who are less attractive, those who feel alienated, and those who are experiencing educational or behavioral difficulties.



Chapter Summary

Hold Strong Convictions Founded in the Gospel

- Be committed to teaching as ministry
- Adopt pedagogy of trust

Reflective Prayer

“ . . . our primary mission is the evangelization of young people. Fundamental to our educational charism is the response of André Coindre to poor, neglected, and dechristianized youth. . . . Each and every student is known, valued, treasured, and taught in partnership with the family. Hospitality, availability, personal interest, and concern for others are hallmarks of this charism. We emphasize the formation of the whole person, traditional values, high expectations, self-discipline, fairness, professional competence, and collaboration. The respect, kindness, and concern which flow from the charism are signs within the school of the compassion of Christ.”

(The Educational Charism of the United States Provinces of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart)



I believe, Lord.

I believe that each of my students is your child.
I believe that they are a reflection of your love.

I believe that each child possesses special gifts and talents,
that you are entrusting me to help them discover these gifts
and nurture those talents.

I believe that each child is trying to find you
and that I can be a model of how to look,
how to live, how to pray.

I believe that my job is actually a mission, a ministry;
that you have chosen me in this time and in this place
to be there for these kids.

I believe that there is nothing haphazard about my day,
about my experiences with my students or with their parents.
It is all part of your plan.

I believe that you have chosen me, Lord.
I believe.

Chapter 12

We Expect Ourselves To Be Men and Women of Faith

Students choose a Catholic school because we're different. I would like to think that we're different because we have a message, a mission. Catholic schools have a mission of preaching God's love. I try to be committed to that. We have a lot of kids who lack love for whatever reason. And, they have to be made aware that, no matter what they are suffering, no matter what their experience is, there is somebody there who loves them. If I can personify that, it makes it more real for them. There is someone there who loves me, who cares for me. That is the gist of what I'm trying to do here.

—Br. Donald Tardif, S.C.

As Br. Donald Tardif comments above, young people and their parents choose Catholic schools because they are different. They are places where young people can experience the unconditional love of God and thus can grow and develop into their fullest potential. Yet, this growth can happen only if we, the lay and religious who staff these Catholic schools, are men and women of faith ourselves. Two key elements of being men and women of faith are pursuing a personal faith journey and living in community.

Following a Personal Journey

Few would dare dispute the fact that it is not possible to give what you do not have. In regard to the evangelization of young people, to pursue such a mission successfully we must pursue also our own personal faith journey. Teachers in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart remain faithful to the call to be men and women of faith and pursue a personal faith journey by:

- ▶ Regularly engaging in personal prayer
- ▶ Frequently using the daily challenges of school life as opportunities for prayer and faith development

- ▶ Seeking a faith perspective as a way to comprehend and assess everything in our lives from career issues to relationships and personal trials and difficulties
- ▶ Recognizing and embracing the fact that faith is essentially more about trusting and risking our lives on God's providential love than about intellectual understanding or assent
- ▶ Recognizing the need for periodic renewal and recommitment
- ▶ Sharing with students (in an appropriately limited way) one's own prayer life and thus the need to confront and transcend personal limitations
- ▶ Approaching teacher and student retreat experiences with an openness to the presence of God.

Brothers should keep closely united to God during the whole time of school, and beg His assistance in their difficulties.

—1928 *Rule of Life*, p. 218

Living in Community

The call to be men and women of faith cannot be faithfully lived outside of community. The call to faith is itself a communal experience. Thus, being men and women of faith means living in community and:

- ▶ Recognizing that God's incarnation through Jesus is a sign that salvation is a communal and not merely an individual experience
- ▶ Recognizing that the active apostolate of teaching and living in family or religious communities is not a deterrent to faith—rather, it is through our apostolic service and communal sharing that faith is developed
- ▶ Periodically engaging in community events designed to reconcile and celebrate community life
- ▶ Embracing multiple communities of faith—our family community, our school community, the community of our colleagues, our parish community, and the community of the wider church

- ▶ Taking an active role in classroom prayer with students as a genuine personal prayer experience
- ▶ Providing a solemn, respectful atmosphere for classroom prayer
- ▶ Personalizing our prayer with students by welcoming intentions from students and sharing our own.



Chapter Summary

Be Men and Women of Faith

- Pursue a personal faith journey
- Participate in communities of faith

Reflective Prayer

“Preach the gospel at all times; if necessary, use words.”

(St. Francis of Assisi)

“The Heart of Jesus is a dwelling place, not so much to escape the troubles and the dangers of the world, but as a place of transformation where the faithful person allows himself or herself to be identified with their model. In the dwelling place of the Heart of Jesus, the Brothers and all those who live this same spirituality become in turn the Heart of Jesus. They become wounded hearts and open hearts for all people, and in particular for the young for whom they are responsible.”

(Br. Rene Sanctorum—“New Evangelization and Founding Charism of Father André Coindre”)



Slow me down, Lord.

I've been running for too long.
I'm beginning to wonder,
Am I running from or running to?

I need to spend some time with you, Lord.

I need to recommit myself to all I believe.

I need the renewal that your Spirit brings.

Hold me, Lord.

Rekindle my compassion with the warmth of your Sacred Heart.
Re-inspire my imagination with your gift of wonder.
Replenish my energy with the power of your love.
Restore my soul with the essence of your being.

Take me, Lord, for I am yours.

Conclusion

In Harry K. and Rosemary T. Wong's book *The First Days of School*, a professional is defined "not by the business a person is in but by the way that person does his or her business." While Harry and Rosemary Wong do a marvelous job in their book of describing what professionalism means in the context of teaching, the contention of this handbook is that education in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart goes beyond methodology and even professionalism.

By no means does this statement deny the skill development needed for success in teaching. Effectively managing a class full of young people and instructing them in ways that promote learning in various content areas is a daunting task even for experienced teachers. Teachers can learn technical skills that will make them more successful at this difficult task. In fact, this handbook offers numerous practical suggestions that have been used by successful teachers, both Brother and lay, for decades. By focusing on the numerous practical suggestions regarding real classroom situations that teachers must handle each day, we intend to provide teachers, new and not so new, with a tangible expression of how master teachers in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart practice effective teaching. We hope that you continue to find the practical suggestions and applications helpful.

Education in this tradition includes components of instruction, formation, and witness. All three are essential to address the lofty expectations that are worthy of a life's investment—our own and those of our students.

In reviewing these pages, you should clearly see that the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart offers more than just a methodology. Education in this tradition includes components of instruction, formation and witness. All three are essential to address the lofty expectations that are worthy of a life's investment—our own and those of our students. Essentially, our degree of success in our mission is dependent upon the quality of our personal and communal witness to students even more than it is upon our competence in subject matter and effectiveness in managing a class.

As often as possible, we included actual quotes from master teachers in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. We feel that reading the words of these masters and, through their words, sensing their passion for their life's work will motivate and inspire you in your own work. We also invite you to take advantage of the words and insights of many of these masters through the web site sponsored in conjunction with this handbook. It can be found at:

<http://www.beyondmethodology.org>

Also included on the web site are various other documents from the Institute of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. Our hope is that these various resources offer you a comfortable invitation to the "dinner table" conversation with others in the tradition of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. A dinner table, after all, is where collaboration and sharing traditionally take place. We hope you come back frequently to share collaboration and insight.

