

Coffee Talk

Conversation Starter Sheet for Children's Bible Study Leaders

First Impressions

Read or recite Philippians 1:6. *"Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."* KJV

What is a First Impression? What is it that defines a Good / Bad first impression?

In this Coffee Talk session we want to chat about First Impressions and how First Impressions relate to our ministry to boys and girls in the Sunday school environment.

In considering our task of making great impressions we will use the word EACH! Our **Strategy** is to break down into **4 Primary Areas** the ways we make our Best First Impression! Our **Goal** is to establish a **Starting place** and a **Finish Line** that we always cross!

E- Environment

A- Activities in Class

C- Closing Events

H-Heart of the Class

ENVIRONMENT - *Starting Line*

What elements of the learning environment make a great first impression?

Take 1-2 minutes and {individually or as a group} list as many *first thoughts* you have about things are important for a great First Impressions! (Use poster boards, tear sheets, or 11 x 17 paper)

- What should a classroom look like?
 1. Age Appropriate
 2. Visually Appealing
 3. Set-up and Ready ahead of the class start time (receiving time)
 4. Clean
 5. Secure
 6. Appropriate Furnishings & Fixtures
 7. Necessary resources and supplies (standard items left in the room & lesson specific items)
- What makes a classroom inviting?
- What are considerations of your learning environment that you CAN Control?
- What are elements of your learning environment for which you have NO Control?
- Other Considerations: Multi-use, get rid of clutter, teacher resources, storage, space

ACTIVITIES - *Signal Flags or Race Markers*

What kinds of activities make a great first impression?

Write the *Words in the following bullet points* and put them on the floor – have someone toss a bean bag onto one of the sheets and use that as your discussion starter rather than following the outline.

Explain that sometimes we make the greatest impression when we change things up.

- Bible Skills!
 1. Ideas for Teaching the Books of the Bible!
Spoons, Cups, Egg Cartons, Note Cards, Game Floor Mat, Pool Noodles, Craft Sticks
 2. Illustrations for teaching the Bible effectively!
Posters, Teaching Pictures, Props
- Lesson Planning & Preparation!
 1. Prepare ahead of time.
 2. Be on time & Start on time, Teaching begins as the first child enters the room & ends when the last leaves.
 3. Use the Bible.
 4. Create a focal wall.
 4. Arrange the supplies (make sure that your supplies are ready for you to teach.)
 5. Apply the curriculum (tailor it to your kids.)
- Games and Events
Be sure to look for ways to involve the kids in teaching – (don't just tell them a good story.)

CLOSING EVENTS - *Finish Line*

What kinds of closing activities and events make a great first impression?

Creatively share the following as appropriate for the setting for which you are instructing.

- Mangle the door (safety) – be aware of children as they are picked up from your classroom.
- Make memories – plan ahead how you will close each lesson so that kids will know, understand, and be able to not only repeat – but also live out the lesson application.
- Maintain the flow – make sure you have enough activities to enable you to effectively cross the finish line with your kids – think about what the parents will see when they come back and look in your classroom.
 1. Time killers are often used; but do they teach?
 2. Take away something good!

Ideas: Bible Aerobics (*kids do an activity like 5 jumping jacks then look up a verse and the first to find it reads it aloud.*)

HEART OF THE CLASS

What sets the tone for the teaching session and makes a great first impression?

- Prepare yourself – spiritually as well as with all your supplies
- Plan for mishaps
- Provide your own life experiences as teaching helps.
- Gently remind teachers that the heart that they have is going to translate into the heart of their class.

Pray together and ask God to give each Sunday school leader a new desire to see themselves the way God wants to see us and to see their class the way God sees them. *Matthew 19:13-15*

Questions for the Pastor: Encourage teachers to meet with their pastor, SS Director, etc... to discuss ways to improve the First Impressions of your church as God leads you to make a Great First Impression.

Notes:

When teaching this Coffee Talk in a group setting you will need a variety of supplies so make sure to provide as needed. If you set up a room to teach – try your best to “apply” all that you will encourage, although this is difficult when not on your own turf. Also consider using a Race Motif for decorations:

For Instance: Starting Line and Finish Line (because in teaching we cross both), and you may want to use a Yellow Flag (warning), White Flag (last lap, wrapping it up, headed home), and a Checkered Flag (you've won!) Congratulations!!!!!!!