

Tips for Teaching High School Sunday School

Shana Peachey Boshart

Be Assertive. The most common mistakes I see Sunday School teachers make have to do with a lack of assertiveness.

-Don't be afraid to tell kids what you need from them to have a successful lesson. They may balk at your request, but don't back down on reasonable requests such as getting out of their seats to do an activity, get into small groups, etc. If you can't get them to do these simple things, you won't accomplish much. They won't hate you for being assertive with them.

-Begin and end the session with clear signals. For example, if the class is visiting and you are ready to begin, talk loudly enough to be heard over the class and say something like, "Okay! Let's get started. Today we're going to talk about how Jesus was tempted." Begin only when you have their attention. At the end of the period, give a clear signal that the class is over and they are dismissed.

-Don't assume that your class will hate the activities suggested in the lesson. How do you know unless you give them a fair shot? Teens will have a better experience when they get up and do "stupid" activities than if they sit in their seats for the whole time. No, that's not what they tell you, but try it and see.

Be Prepared.

-Give at least one hour a week to lesson preparation. The more you prepare, the better Sunday School will go for you. It really is that simple.

-The steps through the lesson (i.e. "teacher helps") were prepared to make your job easier; use them! Make an effort to understand why the lesson is laid out the way it is. How does one activity flow into another? What is the purpose of the various steps? When you analyze and understand these things, you can use and adapt the lesson with more effectiveness.

-Do yourself a favor and attend training sessions for Sunday School teachers. When you are trained for a task, you feel more competent, understand how to do it well, and enjoy doing it more.

Be Accountable. You are responsible for a significant portion of your class's religious education.

-Report at least quarterly to the class's parents about what the class is studying. Invite them to ask their youth about Sunday School class.

-Keep your Sunday School superintendent informed about what your class is doing and how teaching is going for you. Let him/her know when you need support or advice.

-If you have complaints about your curriculum, take them to the Sunday School superintendent and ask for help. Cooperate with him/her to find a good solution.

-Pray for your students and for guidance as a Sunday School teacher. God is faithful to equip you for the task to which he has called you.