

## Some Ideas for the First Day of Classes

Here are some ideas for the first day of class. Some key things to do on the first day are:

- Set up class rules.
- Discuss how to take care of other people's things and that we need to respect the classroom and desks.
- Discuss your expectations.
- Get to know your students.

Sometimes it is useful to have a worksheet, coloring page or something else for the kids to do when you are talking to a parent, helping those who are late to get settled or for those who are early to keep busy.

Sometimes it is useful to give the students a letter for the parents outlining our expectations. It is often easier to send it home on the second week since the first day may be chaotic.

Make notes for yourself on what you want to cover in a particular class.

Pray for your students.

Pray about your class plans.

### Set up class rules

It is good for the students to know what is expected of them. The usual rules of respecting others, listening and participating in class are good. Additional rules that are a bit unique to our situation are respecting the desk and classroom we are using, since it isn't ours.

Since we only have 1 hour and 30 minutes, it is a good idea to require the kids to use the bathroom and get any drinks of water before class starts.

One option for setting your expectations is the *Packing for the Journey* activity (see [Packing.pdf](#)).

You may want to discuss how to behave when we are praying in the classroom. Things like folding our hands, making the sign of the cross, focusing on a picture or cross to help us think about God, stopping and joining in if coming into the classroom in the middle of prayer, etc.

Respecting others. All people are special. Treat them that way.

You will need to keep attendance so you may want to tell them how you will be doing that.

### Our Expectations

We have some expectations for the kids throughout the year.

Be in class. 3 absences are allowed. In actuality, if they know what they need to know and have to miss more, it is not a problem but it is good to set the expectation that they be there.

There will be 4 Saturdays when they need to be here in the morning. 3 are retreats/workshops 1 is First Penance.

Be on time.

Pray. We expect them to pray at home or school during the week.

Go to Mass every Sunday. We will reserve some pews if they want to join us at 5 pm Mass before class.

Memorize your prayers.

You may want to require them to participate in Christmas and Holy Week activities. Holy Thursday Mass is very appropriate for them this year and the Good Friday mime is something they will enjoy and learn from.

Do service activities in some form. This could be the 2 parish service days or something on their own or something as a class. They could bring a canned good every week for the food pantry.

Attend workshops on Saturdays.

They must provide a copy of their Baptismal certificate and other paperwork before the end of the year.

### Our Goals for the Students

The things we want the students to get out of this year of classes include:

- Understand the sacraments.
- Know more about the Mass and why we go.
- Know how to receive communion and why.
- Know how to go to confession and why.
- Know the basic prayers.
- Know who the Holy Spirit is and the Trinity.
- Know who Jesus is.
- Know about the saints enough to be able to choose one for Confirmation and understand why we want to be saints.

### Get to know your students

You may want to have the students make name tags or use disposable sticky name tags. A folded index card can be set on the desk.

Introduce yourself, too.

Find out what they know and what gaps need to be filled. This could be done with verbal questions or a written questionnaire. Some ideas for questions:

What do you expect to learn this year?

Why do you think you are here this year?

Who is Jesus? Who is God the Father? Who is the Holy Spirit?

What prayers do you know?

What activities do you like? Reading? Writing stories? Coloring? Acting out stories? What kinds of games?

You could let them get to know each other by playing a bingo game where they talk to each other.

### Additional Material

It is always good to have extra material ready in case you finish all of the above and still have time left. Next week we will be going over the Mass, Prayer, the Bible and the sacraments but you could start talking about those things this week.

Since we are expecting them to go to Mass, we will be talking about the Mass. If you have time, you could talk about why we go to Mass every Sunday.

Since we are expecting them to memorize prayers, you could talk to them about what prayer is. You can go over the Sign of the Cross.

You can talk to them about God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Even though they have been learning about Jesus all last year, they will probably not know much. Attached is an overview of the life of Jesus you could use.

The reason they are in this class is to receive the sacraments. You can briefly go over what sacraments they will be receiving this year and what they are about.

You could also introduce them to the saints: who they are, why we pray to them.

You could make a class prayer box.

### Prayers to be memorized

These are some of the prayers and teachings they will need to know:

- The Sign of the Cross
- The Our Father
- The Hail Mary
- The Glory Be
- The Morning Offering
- Grace Before Meals
- Grace After Meals
- The Act of Contrition
- The Guardian Angel Prayer
- The Apostles Creed
- How to Pray the Rosary
- The Ten Commandments
- The Seven Sacraments
- The Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

### Games

Here are some games you could do on the 1<sup>st</sup> day.

Meet People Bingo.

Journey

Match to partner