

Classroom Standards & Behavior

There are some issues that can surface in a nontraditional classroom. Without the controls of a public school setting, some children may feel a bit freer to "feel their oats." How can we, as inexperienced teachers, handle this?

Keep a sense of humor and establish ground rules immediately from the first class setting. Children need to know what the limits are, and will do some testing. For the most part, they are relieved to have the security of limits. With older children, the teacher may well establish these limits together with the group.

The goal of the teacher is to provide a loving experience with a positive atmosphere of caring and sharing. These are "rules" passed on from a UUA RE conference that may be of some help:

1. Be considerate of others.
2. Wait your turn to speak.
3. It's OK not to speak (to "pass").
4. Share.
5. Stay on task.

There will be days when the group is behaving as if affected by the cycles of the moon (or late bedtimes, overactive play, or any number of reasons). Within the general goals of the lesson, the teacher may have to modify the plans to keep the children on task. This may mean forgoing a discussion because they are just too active ("antsy") and going right into an activity. Getting a group motivated that appears to be in a passive mood may be a bit harder. Starting with a story may be just the motivator to activate them for a hands-on project or activity.

Modifications in your lessons are easy when you have planned more activities than you need -- and of different types.

Adapting to the needs of the group may be the least of your problems when faced with a difficult behavior problem. Contact the DLSG if behavior becomes extreme and the child needs to be removed. And speak to the parents about *any* incidence of problematic behavior.

For teachers with special education children enrolled in their classes:

In the case of children with learning disabilities and behavior disorders, the DLSG and the parent will confer directly with the teacher. Please note, however, that such information is confidential and the privacy of families should be respected. Information pertinent to the Sunday School situation only will be given.