

## 50 Ideas in 60 Minutes.

Let's go!

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I've prayed for you. I've prayed over our time together. I'd love to do this once more and invite God into our conversation this morning/afternoon before we begin.

I have to say, I was practicing with my husband in the car and when I said I was going to begin with a short prayer, he replied, is it, "Please God, help this not suck?"  
LOL!

Let's pray...

Heavenly Father,

You are good.

Your plans are good.

You are faithful.

You are holy.

Thank you for those you have gathered in this room. Thank you for the love you have for each one of us. We are known and seen by you.

We come before you and ask that you would please fill us with your love, flood us with the Spirit, and equip us for the work you have called us to do. And please help this presentation not... stink.

We love you,

Amen.

# Sheila Dokter

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Wife  
Mother  
Daughter  
Friend  
Teacher  
Child of God



Let me introduce myself - My name is Sheila Dokter

Wife

Mother

This is my family pictured here... These are Todd and my three girls and the boys they love - and wow we love them too. What a blessing it is to do life beside this crew.

I'm also a

Daughter

Friend and

Teacher

But what defines my life most fully is the truth that I am a

Child of the King, loved by God.

This is what defines you too. You are loved. You have so much worth.

I have had different prayers in different seasons of my life and my prayer most recently is to love God more fully with my life. I want my life to be about Him.

This is my 28th year as an educator, and I also I turned 50 this past year. Last year at CEA I was inspired by the sectionals I attended and started to wonder if I had something to share that would inspire and encourage educators - then I began wondering if I had FIFTY things to share...

In this sectional my hope is to inspire you,

encourage you,  
and prayerfully, to point you to God.  
I'll offer up some **creative lesson ideas**,  
some **outdoor education** tips,  
and a few **classroom management** suggestions -  
and my dream is that out of 50 ideas,  
you'll walk away with two or three you are ready to implement into your classroom routines and learning communities on Monday.

Let's GO! There are bets amongst my staff if I can make it though or not...

# 1. Buy an oversized Sweatshirt.

Buy an oversized sweatshirt to change into the minute you get home. (Like huge.)

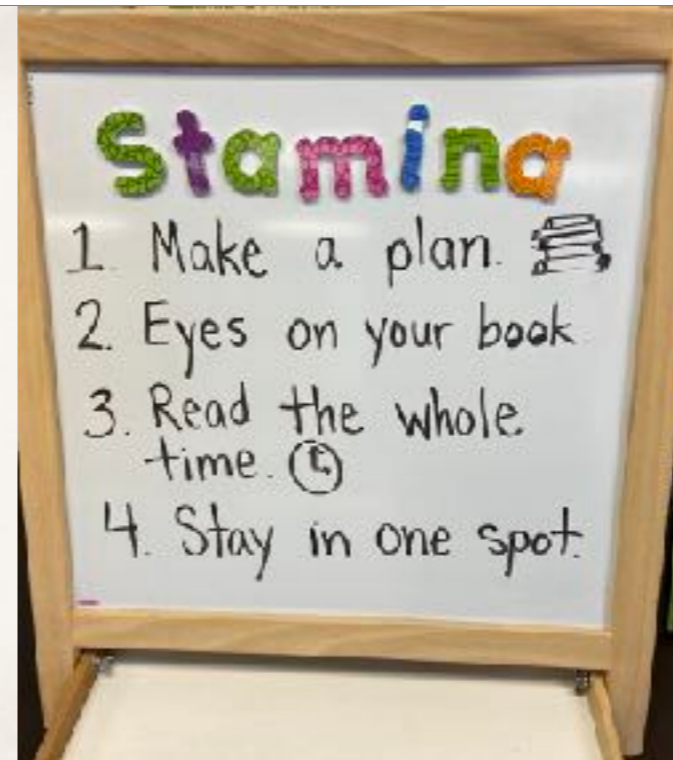


- ❖ I laughed at when I had my first idea come to mind - this was it. But, for the sake of being true to what God put on my heart, and my LIST, I went with it... This is truly what mine looks like. Nike XXL
  - ❖ I change into mine most days when I get home.
  - ❖ These's something about taking a moment to rest and breath after pouring yourself out for the day...
- This said, the list that follows is in
- ❖ NO particular order of importance.
  - ❖ Not even totally organized by topic...
  - ❖ Just 50 ideas I jotted down in the reminders section of my phone as I rolled through the year last year. I titled it 50 GREAT Ideas - And, I have to say, this first one does matter. Even if it's just to remind you that you have a good God who wraps His love around you like a well worn sweatshirt.

Make sure what you are putting on your classroom walls holds **MEANING** for your students.

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BUILD your classroom bulletin boards TOGETHER.



- ❖ Build your classroom together.
- ❖ Make what is on the walls important and necessary.
- ❖ Stop trying to make it all cute. (That's exhausting.)
- ❖ Snapped a picture of an easel from my classroom.
- ❖ I refer to it often during independent reading times if a student is not engaged.

## Post Teaching Points in Pocket Charts

I have pocket charts for "Readers..." and "Writers..."  
These charts hold all of my teaching points.



- ❖ Literacy Rich Classroom.
- ❖ Meaningful content on my walls.
- ❖ I WANT my kids to look here and to use this. I don't want these teaching points to just be stuck on a wall and not referred to as instruction for readers.
- ❖ Curriculum: Readers Workshop - teaching points for each mini lesson.
- ❖ I write the BIG IDEAS of the unit or unit section in a different color sentence strip.
  - ❖ Readers read nonfiction text to grow and learn.
    - ❖ Readers Use text features to understand.
- ❖ These teaching points are easily taken out and put in and revisited during mini lessons.
- ❖ When I end a unit, I take them down and start again.
- ❖ Build your classroom together - I NEVER, not once, change bulletin boards during the school year. Everything on the walls of my room we pretty much make together.

“It’s a GREAT DAY  
to be a FIRST  
GRADER!”

Repeat a tag line over and over again. It will stick.

Words matter. Use them to highlight your mission, purpose and culture!



- ❖ Dream up a Tag line! Kids will recognize it! Buy into it! Let it start to define the atmosphere in your room.
- ❖ I greet kids at the door with this line.
- ❖ Kids believe it... Builds community and expectation.
- ❖ At the end of last year my first graders made me a sign with these words on it.
  
- ❖ There is so much power in words. Use them to highlight your mission, purpose, and culture.

## Speak IN FAITH

Pay attention to what you say. We can increase or decrease our level of peace just by the way we talk.

*God loves me and has a good plan for my life.*

*I have favor everywhere I go.*

*Everything I lay my hand to prospers and succeeds.*

*God opens the right doors for me and closes the wrong ones.*

*I am filled with peace.*

*I am joyful.*

*Something good is going to happen to me today.*

Joyce Meyer ~ *A New Way Of Living*



- ❖ We all say a lot of things we don't want to happen in our lives. Why not say things that make you happy instead of sad? Speaking in FAITH is a part of our life in Christ.
- ❖ We can increase or decrease our level of peace just by the way we talk.
- ❖ You can say things like what are listed here...
  - ❖ God loves me and has a good plan for my life.
  - ❖ I have favor everywhere I go.
  - ❖ Everything I lay my hand to prospers and succeeds.
  - ❖ God opens the right doors for me and closes the wrong ones.
  - ❖ I am filled with peace.
  - ❖ I am joyful.
  - ❖ Something good is going to happen to me today.
- ❖ The list can be endless - just make sure what you are saying is what with God's Word says. Getting into agreement with God will open up a whole new world to you. It will put God's plan into action and there is nothing the devil can do to stop it. (Joyce Meyer)



## Read Outside.

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*Any chance you can get.*



- ❖ There's a peace that washes over kids in nature.
- ❖ Same rules as in the classroom. Just outside.
- ❖ Workable space.
  - ❖ Look at these two partner reading in a tree.
- ❖ Read the whole time.
- ❖ Eyes in your book.
- ❖ Stay in one place.
  
- ❖ Beach Towel to sit on outside is part of my classroom supply list.

## Ask readers, “What are you working on as Reader?”

During conferring, let this be one of your first questions when you meet with kids. Students **HAVE** to be in charge of their learning and they **HAVE** to be able to know their goals.

Words matter. Use them to highlight your mission, purpose and culture!



- ❖ Let this be your 1st question in a conference.
- ❖ Students **HAVE** to be in charge of their learning and they **HAVE** to be able to know their goals.
- ❖ Ask this question. It sets the expectation for growth.
- ❖ If students are struggling with knowing their goal, I'll direct them to our pocket chart of teaching points and direct them, “Go and get the teaching point you are working on as a reader...”
- ❖ **NEXT SLIDE:** (be specific with teaching points)

## Be SPECIFIC when you give a teaching point to an individual student.

The teaching point you give to your student in a conference should be clear and concise.



- ❖ Begin by asking what a student is working on, END the conferring time with you naming a teaching point for your student.
- ❖ Be specific - “When you are reading, your voice sounds choppy... listen...”
- ❖ Write down the teaching point you provide and circle back...
- ❖ Ask students to repeat the teaching point back to you, “Okay, what are you going to work on now?” Students have to voice these teaching points.
  - ❖ And then remind the student, “You’re becoming the BEST reader you can be.”
- ❖ Before I give a Running Record I say to kids, “I’m going to listen in closely to you as a reader so that I can learn all about you as a reader. I’ll celebrate what you are doing well and I will also decide what to teach you next.”
  - ❖ After the RR I will do just that - I’ll give a compliment and I’ll also give a teaching point.
  - ❖ Assessment NEEDS to drive instruction. I will often give an example of what the student did during the RR - we’ll go to that page in the book and I’ll say, “You read... - did that make sense?” Or, “What does it really say?” Or, ?? (I’ll speak into whatever is relevant to what this reader needs in order to grow. Assessment has to drive instruction.)

## Travel Bags

These are essential for outdoor learning.



- ❖ Essential for outdoor Education.
- ❖ I put up a packing list for outdoor education that hangs on my door of what students need to include on any specific adventure... Towel, snack, pencil, books, writing binder, etc...
- ❖ Water bottle (have a stash of these handy...)
- ❖ When I take kids outside, I'm often taking MY current curriculum and just doing it outside in a meaningful ways - sometimes connected to nature, sometimes not.

## Write Outside.

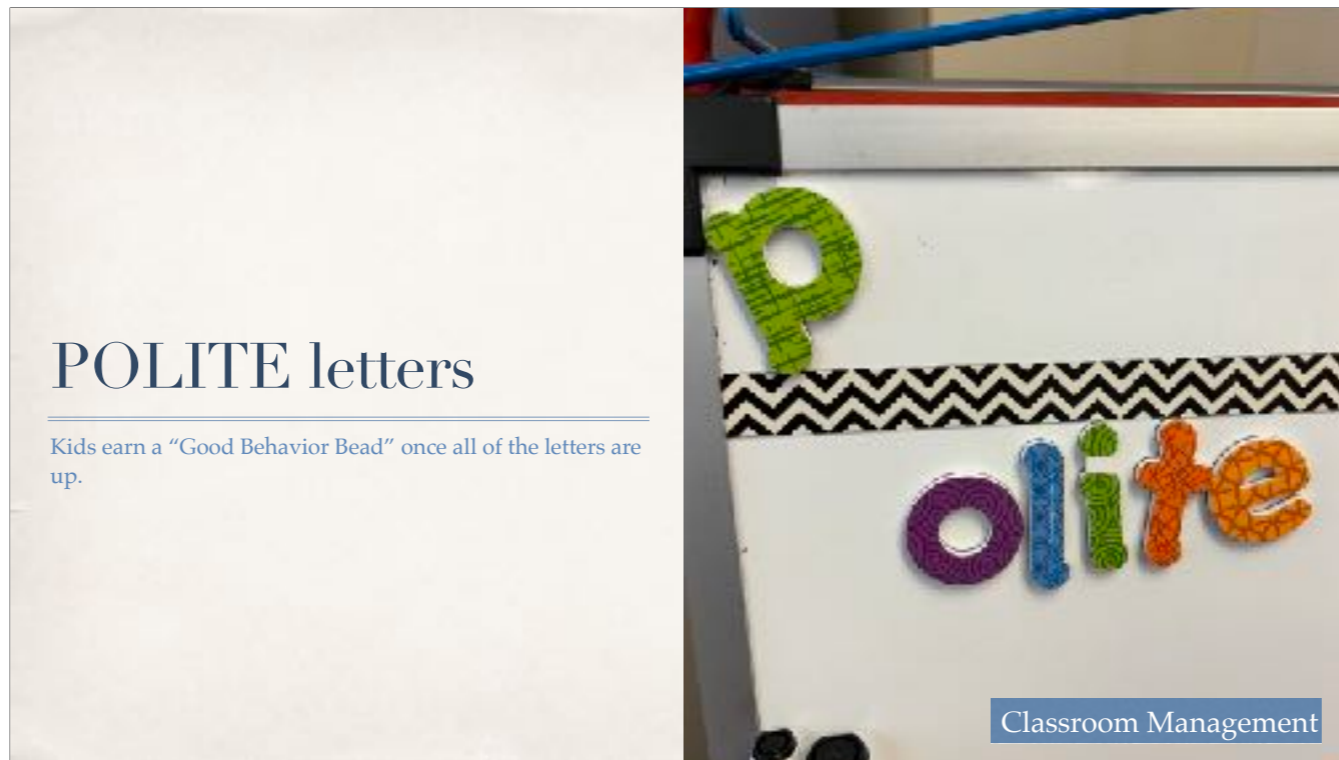
...Any chance you can.



- ❖ Buy a set of lap desks. (Or ask for a parent to donate them.) Choose a day that isn't too windy.
- ❖ Always pack extra pencils.
- ❖ Kids sit on towels and spread them out from each other.
- ❖ Find a spot you regularly go to so kids know what to expect.
- ❖ Set clear expectations the first few times you go out. Practice the guidelines you set. (Stay in one place.)
- ❖ Conferring... When you FINISH a story, come to the conferring blanket/rug/table... I use this method in my classroom as well as when I'm writing outside
  - ❖ Kids gather around and listen to the one receiving feedback. What is often good for ONE is good for all. They benefit from the conversation... When one has to practice a sight word, all the kids in the circle are practicing at the same time. When one is working on capitals and periods, all hear the same teaching point, etc.
  - ❖ I always give students one or two editing notes before they can begin a new story.
  - ❖ I ONLY allow kids to get one writing packet (made of three pages) each day - this slows them down and forces them to add detail.
    - ❖ Some kids will work on the same story of three pages for two or three days, but some who are fluent writers would try to just whip out a couple stories a day without putting forth appropriate effort.
    - ❖ No-one leaves a conferring conference without something to improve.



- ❖ Another line I repeat...
- ❖ We work to fill a 10-frame.
  - ❖ Great for addition review. “We have six. How many more do we need before we reach our reward?”
- ❖ I never take away earned beads.
- ❖ From puzzles, outdoor play, sidewalk chalk, a mystery reader, Bible video and popcorn, an art project I was going to do anyway, to getting a bus and heading to the ODC for time on the playscape.
- ❖ CELEBRATE good behavior. Often.
- ❖ Work hard. Play hard.
- ❖ Connects JOY and fun to your classroom environment.
- ❖ Happy kids perform well and want to engage.



- ❖ It's important to continually PRAISE good behavior.
- ❖ When I say to kids how proud I am of them for specific reasons, they feel amazing. Don't you too? When someone tells you?
- ❖ You could change the word, LISTENER
  - ❖ A learner listens and thinks.
  - ❖ RESPECT
  
- ❖ When you're having to teach kids about an unwanted behavior, you could finish a conversation by saying, "Wow, you listened so well to me just now, I'm going to put up a "polite" letter. This is JUST what I expect. I'm so proud of you." SIMPLE and effective.
- ❖ Kids can move the letters up themselves when you prompt them.

# Make a Reading Fort.

Perfect for a rainy day! (Or ANY day.)



- ❖ Making a reading fort is a small amount of work for BIG impact.
  - ❖ I tell kids about when I was little on rainy days I loved to read in forts and I think it's a great day to do this!
  - ❖ Once it's built, If a child isn't reading, you just let them know they have to read outside of the fort for a few minutes before settling back in...
  - ❖ We play hard and then work hard on this day... (Usually say, "We work hard and we play hard.")
- ❖ This fort could certainly used as a good behavior reward!

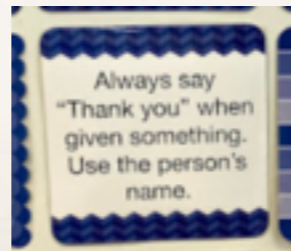




- ❖ I went to the Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta. He has 55 Essentials on his wall! One was don't eat nachos. (Truly!) I came up with ONE Essential:
- ❖ Love God, Love Others. First and foremost. Everything else on here are just practical ways to carry out this command.
- ❖ Put to music...
- ❖ Displayed in a prominent place.
- ❖ Referred to often.
- ❖ When walking in line put your hands by your side, move quietly, and be kind. (Practice.)
  - ❖ Mystery Walker... (Choose a student ahead of time - but don't say who - and if that child walks beautifully, reward him/her.)
  - ❖ Mystery Reader... (Same idea. Focus on engagement)
- ❖ When someone drops something and you're close, Pick it UP!

## Train kids to say, “Thank you.”

Whenever you pass out papers to kids, train them to say,  
“Thank you, Mrs. \_\_\_” or, “Thank you, Mr. \_\_\_”



Classroom Management

- ❖ Thank you, Mrs. Dokter.
- ❖ Once kids get good at this, you can pass a child two or three pages, then they can pass them out too and kids can thank the passer saying, “Thank you, Adam.” Instead of all kinds of talk during transition time, they’re focused on gratitude and getting started.

# Shhh, Shhh, Sh, Sh, Sh.

Classroom Management



- ❖ Quieting down a room...
- ❖ Try it. Repeat it back. (Add sh, sh - sh sh)
- ❖ Not my idea. I saw it once when I was observing a teacher in another school.
- ❖ Tried it. It works. Really.
- ❖ Now other teachers in my building use it too. Makes me smile. Quieter and quicker than yelling over kids...

Woooo, Woooo, WoooOOO!

Classroom Management



- ❖ So embarrassing. But, again, works.
- ❖ Call my class to me. They come RUNNING.
- ❖ We practice.
- ❖ Bells not working one day - I got all the kids in. Truly.

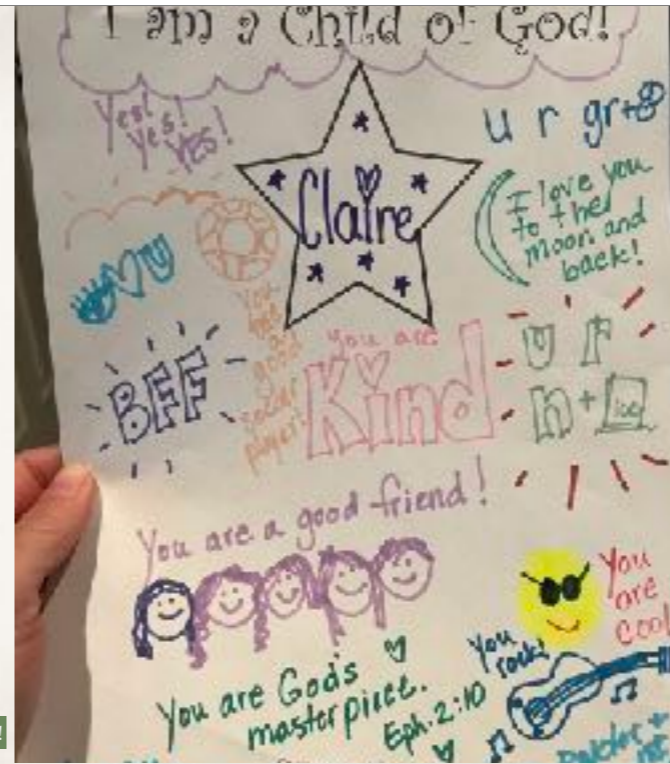


- ❖ Perhaps consider getting rid of job boards. (Work smarter, not harder. Or, work more efficiently.)
- ❖ SAVES time!! The “Helper of the day” leads the line, waters plants, runs errands, explains assignments to kids who need help, etc. etc. etc. All of it.
- ❖ Kids write their names on popsicle sticks. Move sticks with student names from one tin to another. Once all the sticks are moved, start again.

# Encouragement Circle

On a student's birthday, complete an "Encouragement Circle" for that child.

Words matter. Use them to highlight your mission, purpose and culture!



- ❖ Consider not having a Star Student highlighting one student every week (This is so time consuming.) Instead, try this on each child's birthday.
- ❖ Each child speaks one sentence about what they love about the birthday student. Kind of like a fill a bucket type thing... I write down their ideas... Lots of "I like to be your friend" because they like to see me try and draw each kid...
- ❖ Can be done during lunch time (if you eat in your classroom).
- ❖ Helpful if you have a document camera.

## The Bug Girl

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Buy. This. Book.

Makes a great mentor text to have on your shelf.



- ❖ A true story of Sophia Spencer - who was 8 years old when her passion for the insect world became a national news item.
- ❖ Sophia tells her story in her own words...
- ❖ She writes that liking bugs was fine when she was little, but as she got older kids at school teased her. (Kindness matters connection).
- ❖ She almost gave up on her passion until her mom wrote to a group of entomologists asking for one of them to be her "bug pal." (Persuasion writing connection)
- ❖ Connections to being made uniquely in the image of God.
- ❖ Personal narrative connections.
- ❖ MENTOR TEXTS: I have a collection of ten to twelve books I refer to often when I teach. It's important that kids know these books well so that you're not always have to read a full story in order to connect to your teaching points.

Just a quick note of celebration! Claire has made great gains in reading and is now reading at grade level expectations. I met on Friday with our ESS Team (Educational Support Services) and we all agreed that Claire meets the current benchmark and does not qualify for ESS small group support at this time.

As I have been, I will continue to be sure to monitor her progress closely in the classroom; I am confident, with sustained effort, she will continue to thrive. Please reach out to me or to the ESS team with any questions or comments you may have.

So very proud of your girl and her accomplishments! Thank you so much too for your faithful support of her at home.

Grateful for our partnership,  
Shela

## Communicate well.

The good...

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Classroom Management

Write when positive things happen.

Just one example... Taking the time to write these letters matters. Stay ahead of the communication. I write letters all the time... Here's a positive one...



I'd love to touch base a moment regarding some of my observations regarding Stella. Many moments of the school day she is happy, friendly, and seems to be listening respectfully to me. However, as I get to know Stella better and better I am noticing that she needs quite a few reminders to remain engaged - she's is pretty easily distracted during reading workshop and writing workshop. I often have to be directly working with Stella for her to remain engaged. As the year progresses, I am sure she will grow in stamina and in intrinsic motivation to put forth her best efforts; we will work towards this goal.

Keeping lines of communication open is important to me. Please reach out with any questions or observations or insight. I'd love to meet your daughter's needs in the best way possible. We can also touch base at conferences over these notes.

Grateful for our partnership.  
Sheila

Good morning Sheila,

I received a very similar story from a disgruntled Sal. She was at least able to share what she had done and that you were able to gether to eat and work through the situation. I also explained how this hurts others and exclusion is not an option while trying to help her understand how this would feel if it were her on the other end. I thank you for all your help including the follow up. If there is a further apology regarding Jo we are certainly open to it.

The hard...

Classroom Management

- ❖ Write when tricky situations happen.
- ❖ Two examples...
- ❖ #1 reason I have pretty obedient students in my class.
- ❖ Stay AHEAD of the communication.
- ❖ Use language that parents will see on report cards.
  - ❖ Listening respectfully
  - ❖ Applies his/her best efforts...
- ❖ The stories of tricky moments kids have with peers ARE coming home - when you communicate them as well, you're earning trust.
  - ❖ Look at the parent's first line back to me... (Parents are consistently grateful to know.)
- ❖ I always end communication with "Grateful for our partnership." ...Just a reminder that we're on the same team. What a gift this is.

**Restorative Circles**

Research this practice.

Classroom Management

**Restorative Questions (Set B)**

- What happened?
- What did you think when you realized what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Used with permission of the International Institute for Restorative Practices

**Restorative Questions (Set A)**

- What happened?
- What were you thinking of at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

Used with permission of the International Institute for Restorative Practices

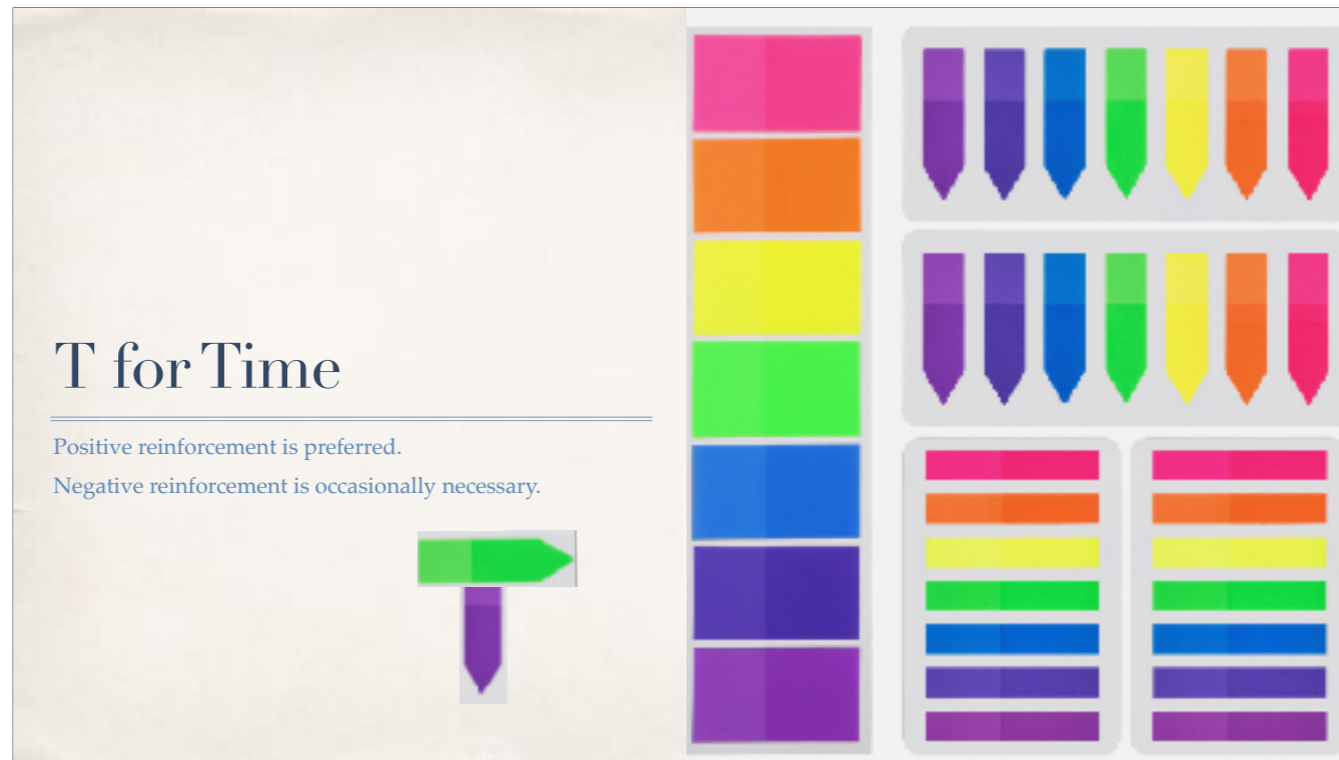
- ❖ Couldn't possibly stick to 1 minutes on this, but it's absolutely worth mentioning... Restorative Circles help to solve conflict resolution.
- ❖ I've done circles whole class - pass a "talking tool" and one person talks at a time. And, I've done circles in small groups.
- ❖ Kids LOVE having a voice.
- ❖ I've done circles for conflict resolution there's a series of questions you ask and kids work through the questions taking turns talking (Pictured on the slide.)
- ❖ Circles build COMMUNITY. Easy one is "Share ONE thing that made you smile this weekend..."

Laugh.

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- ❖ Laugh. It's really that simple. Laugh.
- ❖ Kids are funny.
- ❖ Let kids hear you laugh.
- ❖ It was Christmas and a little girl gave me a gift card to a restaurant in Holland, and she said, "Mrs. Dokter - it's \$100!" But I was holding the card and in the corner it says, \$20 - she sees it, and says, "What? Patrick's teacher got \$100!" (Patrick is her brother) LOL.
- ❖ Be a teacher who laughs.



- ❖ T for Time
- ❖ Individualized behavior management
- ❖ 30 second conversation
  - ❖ 1st flag is just a reminder. Kids come at recess and apologize. I make sure kids name the behavior. For example, “I’m sorry I was talking while you were teaching, Mrs. Dokter.” I accept the apology, remind the child I love him/her and then the flag is removed and thrown away.
- ❖ 2 minute conversation
  - ❖ If a child gets two flags in a short amount of time, they sit with you “T for Time” for a few minuets at recess for remedial teaching on the offense, we practice expected behavior, I speak truth into the child’s life, and I also send a note home.
- ❖ This system works, however, it isn’t for everyone. Be moldable. (Story of little girl who was terrified of “t for time.” I told the mom, that I won’t use the system for her child. The system isn’t worth anxious kids - plus, this little girl wasn’t prone to poor behavior.) This made me think... Maybe others were anxious too. So, I still do this same system, but I just don’t tell kids I send notes home. However, I do. Parent communication is KEY to any behavior management system working.
- ❖ The other key is kids KNOWING they are loved. Keep reminding them.

## Provide time for kids to connect with your Teaching Point.

Students place a flag in their book connected to your teaching point.

Stop & Jot  
Flag



- ❖ For littles, sometimes it just takes too long to “stop & jot” on sticky notes but it only take a moment to flag an important part of the story connected to to a teaching point.
- ❖ “Pay attention to your emotions as you read.”
  - ❖ For example, a teaching point may be to talk with your partner about a part in a story that evoked feeling or emotion from you - a part of the story that surprised you or made you sad, etc. If kids can just “flag” the page, they know just where to go when they are side by side their reading partners.
- ❖ Also, these SCOOP CHAIRS aren’t that expensive and they’re SO comfortable for little kids. I put a link on a “wish list” in my blog next to *Clorox wipes* and *Kleenex* and got a bunch almost immediately.)
- ❖ Movement is so important for kids. I have a bunch of rocking chairs in my classroom too that I’ve collected over the years - I have them all painted red. They’re cute AND worthwhile.
- ❖ Of course - management is connected to EVERYTHING.
  - ❖ Lay your expectations...
  - ❖ These scoop chairs are only used during RW and kids are not allowed to rock wildly... etc. We practice this - provide non-examples. If you see a student abusing the gift, move him/her out. It’s as simple as this...)



- ❖ Celebrations,
- ❖ Hard days
- ❖ Tricky kids
  - ❖ REMIND kids you love them. (Over and over and over again.)
- ❖ When you know a student is anxious.
- ❖ New Student joining
- ❖ Check ins...
- ❖ WOW, parents love this. Kids do too. Sometimes I get messages back.

The image shows a composite graphic for 'The Dokter Dialogue'. On the left, there is a QR code with the Instagram handle @SHEILADOKTER below it. In the center, the text 'Share Stories' is written in a large, blue, serif font. Below this, there are four lines of text: 'Class Blog ~ [dokterdialogue.blogspot.com](http://dokterdialogue.blogspot.com)', 'X (formerly Twitter) - @sheiladokter', 'Face book ~ Sheila Dokter', and 'sdokter@hollandchristian.org'. On the right, a screenshot of the website 'The Dokter Dialogue' is shown. The website header includes the title 'The Dokter Dialogue' and the subtitle 'Mrs. Sheila Dokter - Holland Christian Schools - Kelso from First Grade'. Below the header, there is a navigation bar with 'HOLLAND CHRISTIAN' and 'BLOG FEEDBACK'. The main content area features a post titled 'Building Our Sukkal!' with a date of 'Monday, December 1, 2014'. The post includes a paragraph of text and several photographs of children. A sidebar on the right contains a search bar, a 'Class Updates' section with a colorful illustration, and a 'Find Older Posts' section with a list of dates and titles. At the bottom of the screenshot, a green banner reads 'Words matter. Use them to highlight your mission, purpose and culture!'.

- ❖ Use your class blog to share stories... [dokterdialogue.blogspot.com](http://dokterdialogue.blogspot.com)
  - ❖ MY blog is primarily stories. Invite parents to know what to ask their children about. Give them a glance into the learning...
  - ❖ Try to get kids talking about their learning experiences.
  - ❖ Give parents questions to talk about with their kids... This is a lot of work - but the reward is great.
- ❖ I often make a section called “Snapshots of learning” and add some captions to pictures - MOST parents look at this - it seems a picture with a small blurb draws them in.
- ❖ I also put a “notes and reminders” section up with nuts and bolts and often curriculum updates here. Keeping a consistent format helps it be recognizable when parents go to your blog.
- ❖ I ALWAYS send a quick email out saying, “The blog has been updated! Take a look!”
- ❖ I share stories on social media - feel free to follow me on Instagram if you’d like. I don’t separate school accounts from my personal account - it’s all me - the child of God, the mom, the wife, the teacher, the daughter, all of it...

## Try Stuff.

*The Journey is the Thing* by Todd Dokter



- ❖ Try Stuff.
  - ❖ We've been talking about how stories matter!
  - ❖ I have had this modeled to me over and over because I am married to a man who lives it out. He wrote a book last summer... Stories matter.
  - ❖ Your stories.
  - ❖ Your student's stories.
- 
- ❖ Todd's book is sold on Amazon. Priced it at the cost of a movie hoping you find some encouragement.
  - ❖ Today I'm giving seven away for free. You can have it - the only requirement is that you share with me something that you're willing to TRY from this presentation today!



# Count Blessings

12,808 CEA Family

“What we look for we will find. If we believe God is good and we are constantly grateful for all He is doing in our lives, we are going to see Him more. And the opposite is true as well.”

*See the Good* by Zach Windahl



- ❖ One of the best things I've ever written was a gratitude list I'm still making.
- ❖ 12,808 is my CEA Family. Can you even believe that we are able to be Christian Educators together? It's so special.
- ❖ “What we look for we will find. If we believe God is good and we are constantly grateful for all He is doing in our lives, we are going to see Him more. And the opposite is true as well.”
- ❖ See the Good by Zach Windahl

# Practice GRATITUDE

"Gratitude is literally one of the few things that can measurable change peoples' lives."

*Thanks ~ How Practicing Gratitude Can Make You Happier*  
By Robert A. Emmons, Ph.D.



Gratitude is literally one of the few things that an measurable change peoples' lives.

Encourage your students to write BLESSINGS to God as often as you can.

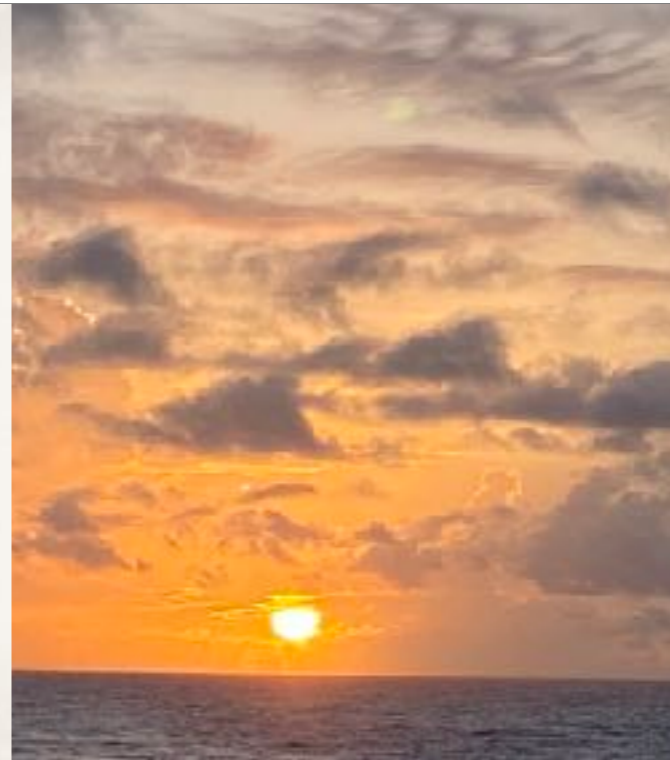
Thank you God for \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_.



- ❖ Our math curriculum has “Remembering Pages” and my students always have one on their desk when they come into the classroom each morning.
  - ❖ Helps with classroom management - Kids know exactly what to expect.
  - ❖ On the back of EVERY morning seat work page kids write a blessing as part of their morning routine. We begin to work on sentence structure as the year goes along...
- ❖ This works ANY time you kids are finishing up and are just “waiting” for what is next... Train them to take each moment to express gratitude to God. ...Don't waste a moment to praise.
- ❖ On the back of Bible pages I OFTEN have kids write out prayers of gratitude centered around the lesson. Make these pages meaningful for kids.

# Sabbath.

Jesus said, "Come off by yourselves; let's take a break and get a little rest." Mark 6:31



- ❖ Be with God.
- ❖ Come, let's get away and rest awhile... Mark 6:31
- ❖ One hour a hour. One day a week. One week a week year. Make time to refuel. (MAKE time.) Choose this.
- ❖ You'll be a better teacher when you do...
- ❖ Choose sabbath rest that fuels you.

## Nature Art

I notice...

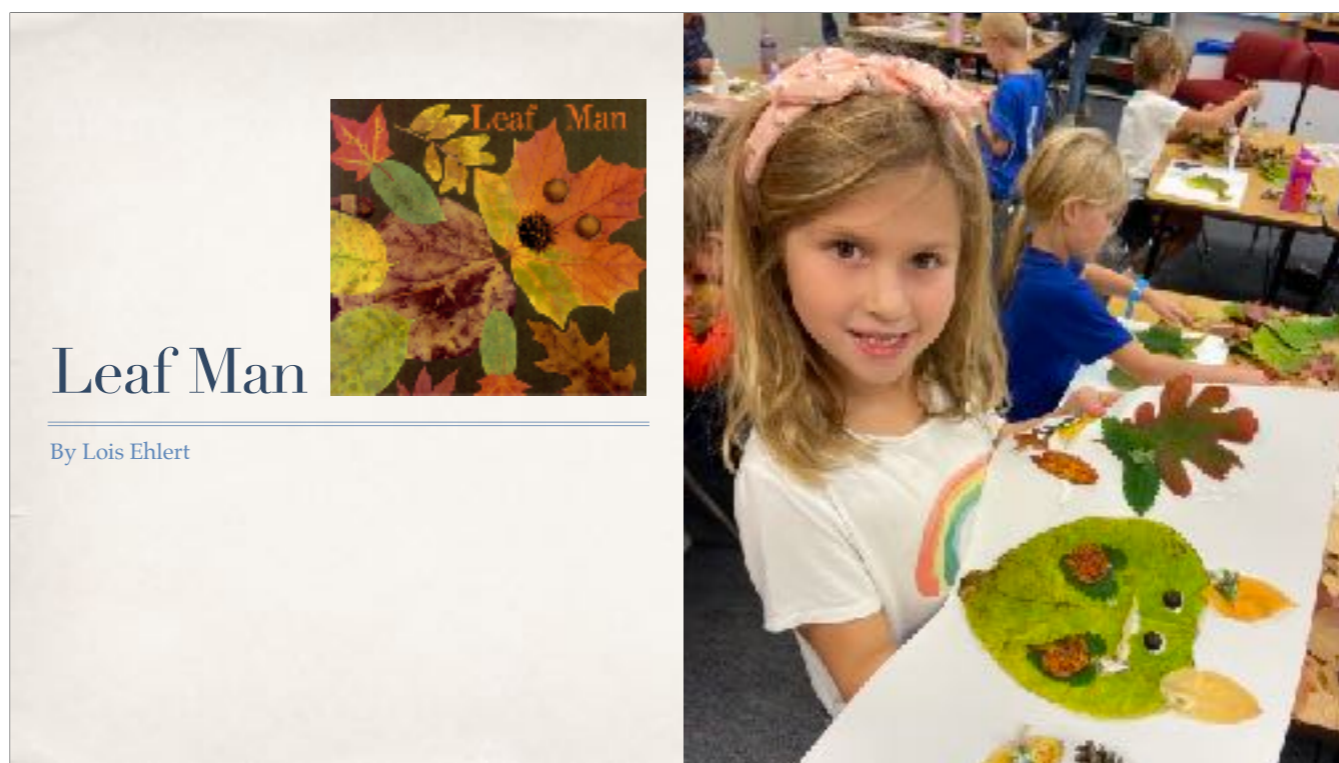
I wonder...

This reminds me of God...

1 LORD, our LORD,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!  
You have set your glory  
in the heavens.  
2 Through the voice of children and infants  
you have established a stronghold against your enemies,  
to silence the foe and the avenger.  
3 When I consider your heavens,  
the work of your fingers,  
the moon and the stars,  
which you have set in place,  
4 what is mankind that you care for them,  
human beings that you care for them?  
5 You have made him a little lower than the angels<sup>1</sup>  
and crowned him with glory and honor.  
6 You made them rulers over the works of your hands,  
you put everything under their<sup>2</sup> feet  
7 — the oxen and donkeys,  
and the animals of the wild,  
8 the fowls of the sky,  
and the fish of the sea,  
all that swim the paths of the ocean.  
9 LORD, our LORD,  
how majestic is your name in all the earth!



- ❖ Use Psalm 8 to guide the lesson.
- ❖ Our God is a CREATOR.
- ❖ We look a lot like God when we create
- ❖ Take time to consider the heavens... Take time to observe the detail found in God's creation and then marvel at it! How much more does God love YOU and the children you teach!
- ❖ Students could write about what they created!
  
- ❖ Picking nature? If there are more than 20, feel free to use in in art...
- ❖ Sticks - "If it's bigger than you, it takes two..."
- ❖ Climbing trees - you can climb as high as I can reach...
- ❖ No nature on the bus
- ❖ Living creatures are observed and then put back into their natural habitat



- ❖ Perhaps use this book as a mentor text for a teaching point in Reading Workshop, or as an interactive read aloud.
  - ❖ Later in the day create the art as a Good Behavior Reward - have kids go and make their own art.
- ❖ Imagine reading the book and they saying, “We’re going on a LEAF HUNT!!!” It’s sheer joy.
- ❖ Shared experiences fuel written work (No more writers block...)
  - ❖ You should be writing with your kids daily during your mini lessons - and when you write, mostly use your shared experiences in your modeled writing. Your teaching point will be that much RICHER because attention is held... The kids can easily relate to the content you are writing and they can contribute ideas because they were there!
  - ❖ Same idea - when you build a fort...
  - ❖ The more you DO, the more you students WRITE.
- ❖ Side note - these are a gluey mess and really only cute on the first day! Hahah. They shrivel up and look sort of unimpressive. But adorable, at FIRST!

“You are in charge of  
your learning.”

Use this language with kids

Words matter. Use them to highlight your mission, purpose and culture!



Classroom Management

- ❖ This language enhances engagement.
- ❖ Kids HAVE to take ownership of their learning. I use these words all the time.
  - ❖ Creates a sense of urgency and that the work they are doing matters (because it does!)
- ❖ I prompt, “Who is in charge of your learning?” They respond, “We are!”
- ❖ With curriculum so individualized these days we have to stress importance on kids taking ownership in learning all they can.
- ❖ Provide a reason why: I am often reminding kids that they do their best work to become the best readers they can be, writers they can be... etc.
  
- ❖ I also remind kids that it is their job to honor God with their best efforts. Their motivation for good behavior cannot be to please me - pleasing God has to be their motivation. I tell them their good behavior pleases me too, but pleasing the Lord has to be the intrinsic goal.
- ❖ Isn't that why we do our best too? Anything else - any other motivation - falls short.

# Get a wagon.

What a gift.



- ❖ Get a wagon and a camp chair - keep blankets inside of it, clipboards, towels, books, portable white boards, etc.
- ❖ A wagon is incredibly helpful.
- ❖ It doesn't have to be nice... (Next slide.)

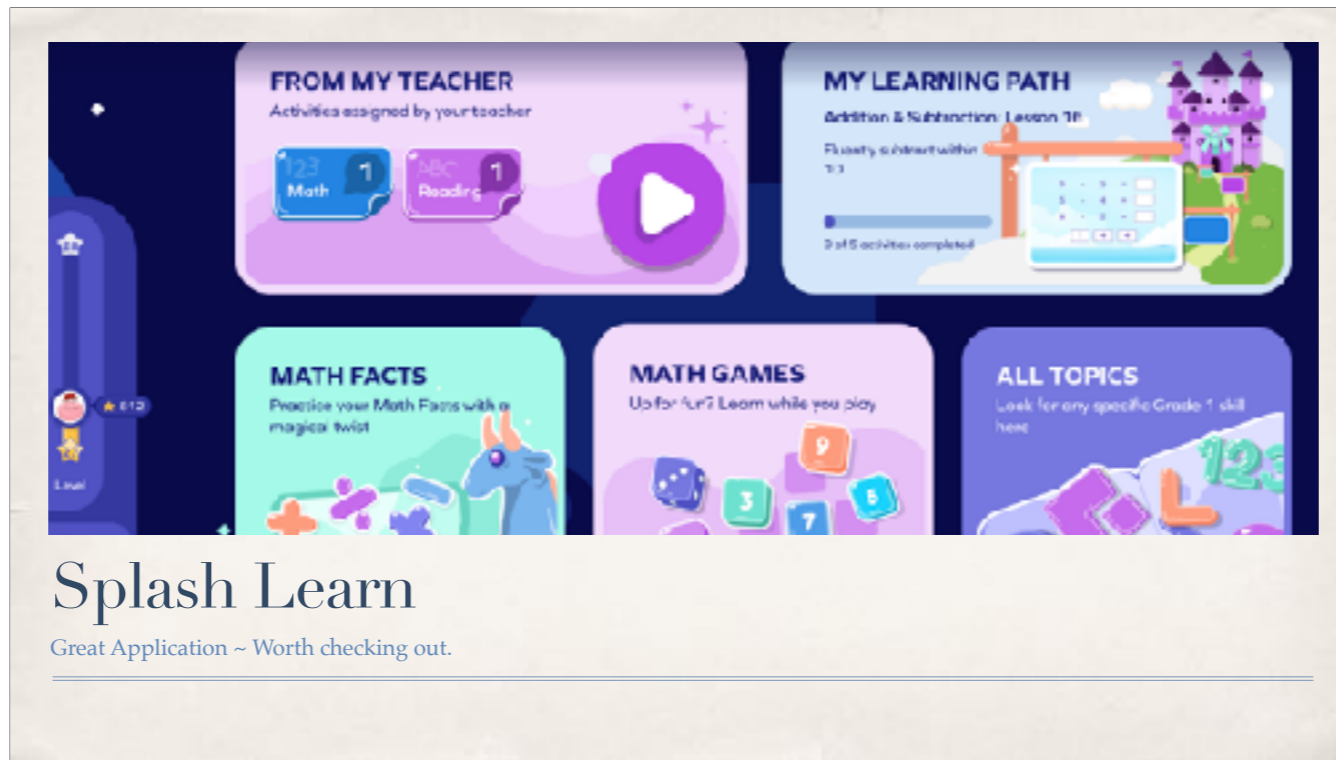


# Share.

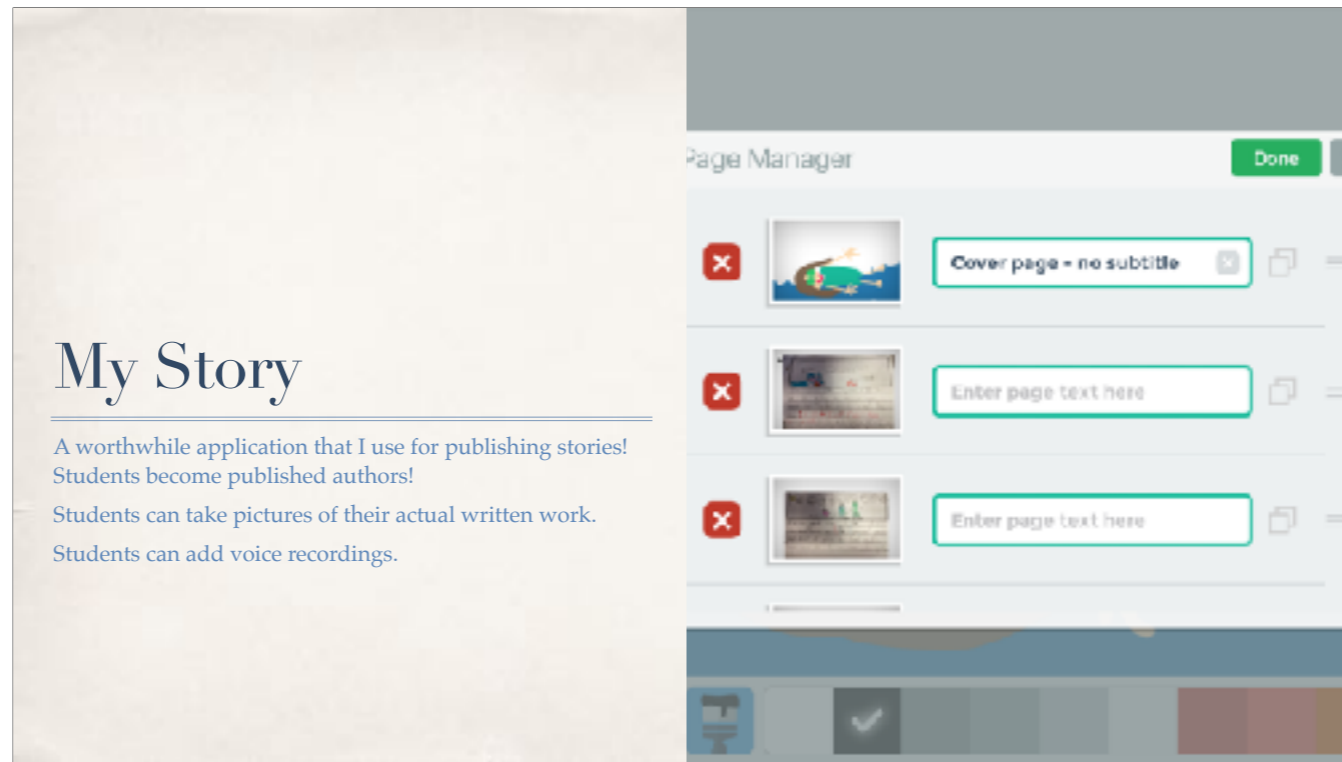
Share your stuff.  
Share your ideas.  
Share your time.



- ❖ Share your stuff.
- ❖ Share your ideas.
- ❖ Share your time.
- ❖ We are each other's greatest resource.
- ❖ A good teacher makes those around her/him better.
- ❖ Pride comes before the fall...
  - ❖ (...Sometimes we can have a tendency to hold a good idea to ourselves to make ourselves look better. Stop this. The fallout is not worth it.)
  - ❖ Give credit where credit is due.
- ❖ Notes about sharing ideas...
  - ❖ Do not hoard your good ideas. (Find outlets to share... Thus, this talk - I'm following my own advice AND a prompt from God. He has gifted me with time... I'm 50 - so I've taught awhile. Maybe what I may say can bless others. It's my hope today.)
- ❖ Be mindful... Seek wisdom from God. Sometimes it's NOT the time to share and it's only time to encourage.
- ❖ *Oversharing* is a thing... (50 ideas may fall into this category! Hahah. Sorry - you knew what you were coming into...) If I get through all of them, it will really be 56 :) So, oversharing might be what I'm doing...
- ❖ Ask permission to share.



- ❖ Great (K-3 especially) app for Reading and Math.
- ❖ Free during school hours. You can choose the grade level to practice at.
- ❖ Multiple choice questions which are found on many standardized tests.
- ❖ You can track progress and set up assignments.
- ❖ CONVERSATION around mathematical experiences fosters growth (kids explaining their thinking, or discussing their mistakes.)
  - ❖ If kids get an error message, I have them come and see me to work/talk through their mistake.



- ❖ Sharable stories. Kids LOVE this. Voice recordings are added in - students can actually record themselves reading their written work. Parents LOVE this.
- ❖ Each time we're finishing a unit, I have kids choose their published story to place into this app. Kids will publish about 5 to 6 a year.
- ❖ Set up iPads so students can email you Or you can airdrop their work to your computer as well. You don't need individual iPads to make this work - you can set up multiple students on one iPad if you had to.
- ❖ In this app, we don't usually go past 4 pages ( a cover they design and then three pages of their writing. I never let kids expand past three pages unless they can PROVE they need a 4th.) Instead I have kids write to the ends of the lines for added details.

## Build an Ice Castle

It's PERFECT if you can plan it out during a procedural writing unit.



- ❖ ...If you can't do this in a procedural writing unit, still do it! Use it as a good behavior reward? It will definitely be full of writing inspiration.
- ❖ Watch the forecast. You need a few days of pretty cold weather.
- ❖ Brainstorm together *how to* do it... (big buckets on the bottom, etc.)
- ❖ Add food coloring to the water so that you have colored blocks of ice.
- ❖ Everything is managed. (A theme. Think all things through and set expectations.) Draw a circle in the snow and kids all sit around it... You'll definitely lose some interest to if it takes too long and kids will be making snow forts with them - talk about that ahead of time - and I'd probably just allow it - but give the kids boundaries of where they can be. The more you set up ahead of time in regards to management, the better these events run. Have a "classroom meeting" and talk about it before heading out to do the work.

## Pancakes and PJs on the 100th day of school.

A sausage link works for a 1. Pancakes are perfect for zeros!  
(Or a small donut!) FUN for kids!

Read 100 Pages.

Write 100 Blessings.



- ❖ Kids somehow always want Pajama Day and I always say, “On the 100th day of school.” LOL.
- ❖ Pancakes go well with PJs - so have some fun with it! Choose to make a sausage link and two pancakes into the #100. Or use a small donut for one of the zeros. Blueberries are fun too for toppings as zeros. And, buy whip cream (not pictured) - that was coming yet down the line...
- ❖ Teach about hospitality. Be hospitable. Go all out. There’s a lot of joy in it - even if it’s not your gift.
- ❖ Read 100 pages.
- ❖ Write 100 blessings! Organized in 10 groups.
- ❖ Psalm 100 for devotions

# Snow! Buckets! Place Value!

Snow, buckets, sticks, and competition make this a perfect game to reinforce concepts!



- ❖ You could easily add variations to this to best suit your curriculum needs.
- ❖ I use this activity to reinforce place value.
- ❖ Line up the buckets.
- ❖ Dig a throwing line in the snow or put out a red rope.
- ❖ Work in teams of 4-5.
- ❖ If a snowball HITS the bucket, it's 10 points. Kids gather sticks to keep track of their totals.
- ❖ If a snowball lands IN the bucket it's 50 points!
- ❖ Play for a determined amount of time. Then, clear the score and start again.
- ❖ ATTEND TO PRECISION.
  - ❖ Neat work in math matters. Fewer mistakes in organized work.

## Tap into the strengths of those around you.

Colleagues!  
Scientists!  
Worship Leaders!  
Community Connections!



- ❖ My teaching partner was a music teacher before teaching first grade. She has put our memory work to music AND has found a way to share it with me...
  - ❖ I would have NEVER have been able to do this.
  - ❖ Now these verses are hidden in our hearts in a unique way.
  - ❖ We need each other. We are each other's BEST resources. Spend time getting to know your colleagues and work closely together. Everyone has something to offer.
- ❖ Teach about stained glass windows. SO much beauty to unpack here. (A collection of class together creates the beauty - we need God's light shining in us/through us to be beautiful...) etc.) We went to Hope College to look at some.
- ❖ Parent who works as a scientist... Comes in to teach about states of water. Here's a sharable link to the experiments we tried! (Copy and paste the link below.)
- ❖ <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1E2givqNmHEfD1G0wYz5EjQL-dwDOpNoR/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=111811834866736042023&rtpof=true&sd=true>

## “Family Meetings”

Gather kids OFTEN to debrief tricky situations.

Ask questions:

“What went well?”

“What do you think we could do differently next time?”

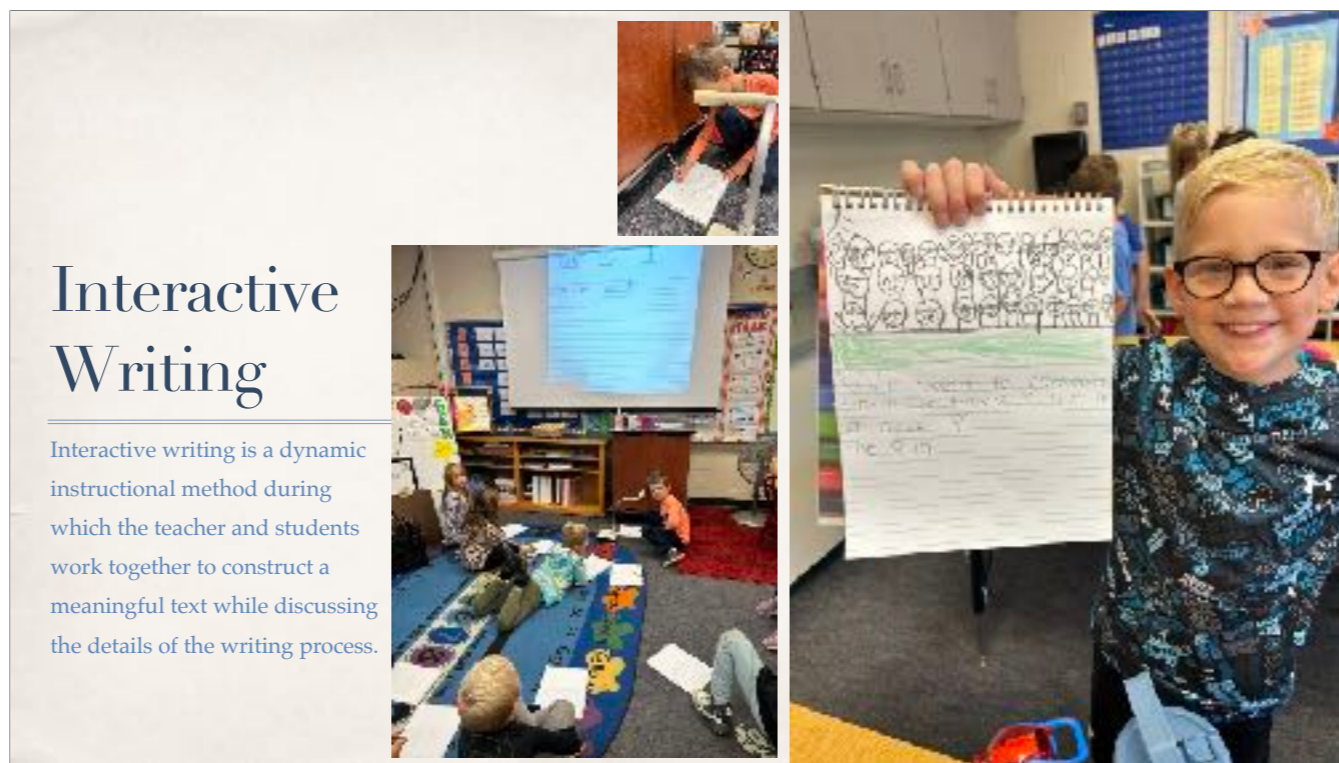
“How did you feel when...?”



Classroom Management

- ❖ Family meetings build community.
- ❖ It's important to give children a voice.
- ❖ Problem on the playground.
- ❖ A chicken died this year...
- ❖ They don't all end in a hug... But, sometimes...
- ❖ When I am outside with kids, I've taught them, "Circle Up!" They respond with "O. K.!" And come running.





## Interactive Writing

Interactive writing is a dynamic instructional method during which the teacher and students work together to construct a meaningful text while discussing the details of the writing process.

- ❖ Interactive writing is a dynamic instructional method during which the teacher and students work together to construct a meaningful text while discussing the details of the writing process.
- ❖ Most people use this method of writing in responses to literature. I do too, but mostly I use it during journal writing.
- ❖ Research this practice. It's GOLD.
  - ❖ Mechanics of writing. (Letter formation, capitals, periods, etc.)
  - ❖ Leads
  - ❖ Stretching sounds
- ❖ Journal writing
  - ❖ Our curriculum doesn't really allow for journal writing... There are so many things to capture on paper - things we never want to forget and writing responses to events help to form the stories/ideas more firmly in kids minds.
  - ❖ Chapel messages
  - ❖ Unique learning experiences
  - ❖ Response to Bible
  - ❖ Black History Monty - we journal on Black Americans (Rosa Parks, MLK, Lonnie Johnson, Jackie Robinson, Michael Jordan)
  - ❖ Thanksgiving, we journal prayers...
- ❖ Share the pen
  - ❖ Keep masking tape handy.
- ❖ We write the first two sentences together, then I send kids off to finish on their own.

## Dokter Daily News

Every now and then make short news reports with your students! They LOVE sharing what they are learning!

We use an app called Green Screen by Do Ink.



- ❖ We've done these reporting on MLK, on reading strategies, and even on a "Spring day in 1st Grade" etc.
- ❖ I sometimes bring in dress up clothes from my closet. They find it FUN! Sometimes students even bring their own! (Look at this sweet boy in his suit coat!) You can write the scripts together or you could write them and kids could practice their lines like a readers' theater during partner reading time in Reading Workshop.
- ❖ Engagement is high.
- ❖ In your classroom those who are doing the most talking (on topic) are doing the most learning... Find ways to engage your students in responding to your teaching.

## Pray.

Pray 1 Corinthians 13 over your students.

Dear Lord, Increase a love that is patient.

Increase a love that is kind....



### ❖ Pray

- ❖ Pray for the students you serve.
- ❖ Pray they grow spiritually. Pray for an increase of faith.
- ❖ Pray 1 Corinthians 13 over your students.
- ❖ Dear Lord, Increase a love that is patient.
- ❖ Increase a love that is kind....
- ❖ Pray the Prayer of Paul - 1 Thessalonians 3:12 “May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and everyone else” (Think about the school family this prayer would build. Think about fewer playground problems)
- ❖ Instead of finding a colleague to complain to when children are difficult, sit in this child’s seat and pray over him/her.
  - ❖ Talking to colleagues is sometimes necessary in situations because we need support and wisdom, but putting down a student is never necessary. Speak the truth in love.
- ❖ Note on Discipline/tricky students... This is a little hard to say, but I’ve noticed that sometimes when my students are making poor choices, at times it is directly correlated to my preparedness and classroom management. When I’m on my game, generally my students are. Perhaps you can relate.

# Be humble.

Pride comes before the fall.



- ❖ My family was joking one night around our dinner table - Talking at home about how many kids don't remember their first grade teacher... Here's a funny story for you... My daughter said, "Ya, I don't even remember mine" ...I died. I was her first grade teacher.
- ❖ Don't try to puff yourself up. It's not worth it. You're already so precious in the eyes of God.
- ❖ Our successes can go to our heads and our failures can go to our heart...
  - ❖ You are NOT your job.
  - ❖ You ARE a child of the King.



## Cozy Corner

Who knew a rubbermaid tote could be so calming for kids!?  
Works wonders for children who have high anxiety.

Classroom Management



- ❖ One of the best learning tools I have in my classroom is this tub.
- ❖ Especially important for kids with high anxiety.
- ❖ It's for everyone! If a child isn't needing it for a calming purpose, the "helper of the day" can read in it.
- ❖ It's movable, so you can bring it right out into the classroom for kids who are having trouble joining the group. It tucks a child right in, and makes them feel safe.

# Pause to Praise!

When you experience the goodness of the Lord, speak it.



Words matter. Use them to highlight your mission, purpose and culture!

Amen!  
There is so much to bless God for.

# Smile

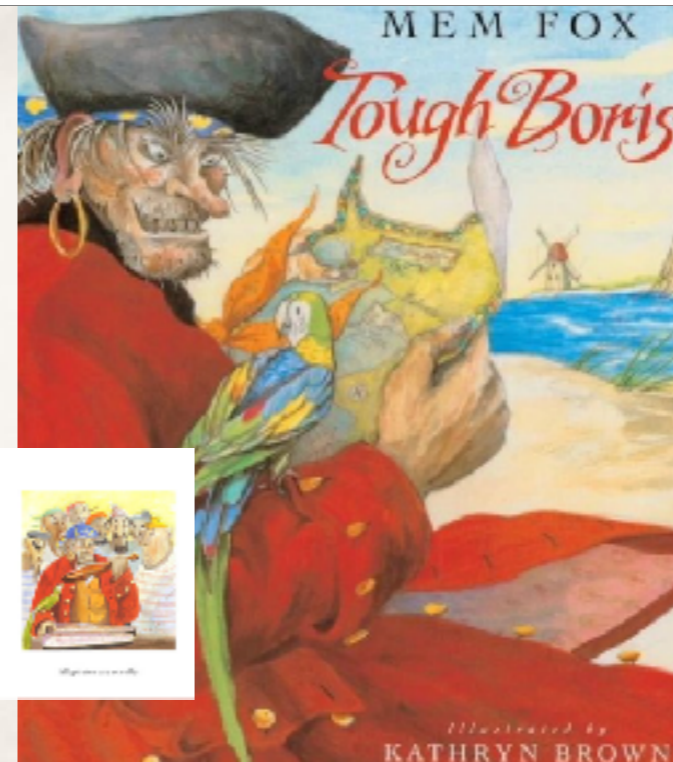
Balloon Spelling will absolutely make you smile.



- ❖ Smile.
- ❖ Discipline with love.
- ❖ Remind kids often how much you love them and that they are the best class you've ever had.
- ❖ Kids bop balloons while spelling sight words. It's fun!

# Tough Boris

"The pictures are important."



- ❖ Perfect book for teaching kids that the pictures in books tell so much of the story.
- ❖ I have two copies. I took one copy of the book all apart. Then I put construction paper over the words and then laminated the pages.
  - ❖ Before reading the book, I pass out the pages to kids and listen to them talk about what they think may happen in the story.





## Plant seeds.

This whole process is such a miracle.



- ❖ You do not need a greenhouse to make this happen. Rose Park is blessed to have one, but even if we didn't, I've found you can plant things in your classroom.
- ❖ I'd recommend getting a grow lamp and a heating pad for plants.
- ❖ It's FUN to watch the different leaves sprout. The kids love making comparisons!
- ❖ Grow beans - take one out each day to study the progress it's making!
- ❖ Make Connections to growing in Christ.
- ❖ Hosea 10:12. ....Sow for yourselves righteousness. Reap the fruit of unfailing love. Break up the unplowed ground, for it is time to seek the Lord.
- ❖ Plant God's Word in your heart.

# Walk.

Jesus walked  
(everywhere.)



- ❖ Walk at the speed of Love.
- ❖ Prayer walk.
- ❖ Be in creation. It calms your soul.
- ❖ “Don’t pass the teacher” (It’s okay to be in a huddle - lines are tricky outside.)
- ❖ Stick crosses in a season of Lent.
- ❖ Walking is where I often meet with God.

# Honor God with your best.

That's it. That's all you have to do.

Be you. We all need you.



- ❖ I say this all the time to students and I end today speaking this over each of you.
  - ❖ Any other motivation falls short. and
  - ❖ Comparison to others leads to the death of your self contentment.
  - ❖ Fight to find your value in who God says you are: loved, chosen, forgiven, a son or daughter of the Most High God.
- ❖ God has called you to this work, He will equip you for this work.
- ❖ I used to think, "*I want to be GREAT!*" I would have said, I want this presentation to be GREAT! But instead I've learned to say, I'll work on being faithful to what God has called me to and GOD will be GREAT. ...May He be glorified in my work. That's the end goal. To God be the Glory.