

Building a Class Identity

Children love to be in a place where they feel they belong, and part of belonging to a class is building an identity around that class. In other words, what sets your class apart from all the others? What makes your kids feel like they belong?

Consider the following ways of helping your children identify with your class:

- (1) Have a Class Banner or for younger classes, a stuffed-animal mascot—you might even send it home with a different child each week. You could even create stories about it that tie into the lesson. Be creative, but tie everything into the curriculum and especially the fact that Jesus loves these children and has special plans for their lives.
- (2) Have a Class Chant or Cheer—You could even have a “Cheer Challenge” between two classes. Each week for a month, at the beginning of Sunday School, these two classes step into the hall and take turns doing their cheer. A judge decides the winner and that class wins the “Cheer Banner” or maybe even takes the other class’s banner for the week. Kids love this sort of challenge and it helps to set the stage for your classroom time.
- (3) Let your kids come up with a class name such as *The Jesus Freaks* or the “J” Crew—let them be creative. Just about anything they choose can have a spiritual application. Say, for instance, that they want to be the “Bears”—Well, then adopt a class theme verse such as “Bear one another’s burdens...” and then when the opportunity arises, tie this verse into the curriculum. Then halfway through the year, let them choose a new name.
- (4) Let your class be the class that...be creative (all wear funny little hats as they sing Happy Birthday to someone in your class, or who wear pop-bottle glasses, or eye-patches, or Burger King crowns during a certain month because it connects them with what they are learning, etc.)
- (5) Pictures also identify kids with a class. If their photo is on the wall, there is a sense that “I belong here—I am a part of what is going on.” This also works with pictures the kids draw—Display them. Show them off.
- (6) Finally, a child’s name is very important. Have their name somewhere in the room—as leaves on a tree, stuck as stars on the ceiling, etc. And always greet children by name—“Bob, it’s so good to see you today!” and greet them as if you are excited to see them (and hopefully you are) as soon as they enter the room.

*Be creative and have fun, but be careful that the identity doesn't become a distraction.
These tools should help you, not hinder you, in your aim for the day.*

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