



*Includes CD-ROM  
with reproducible  
worksheets and  
skill posters!*

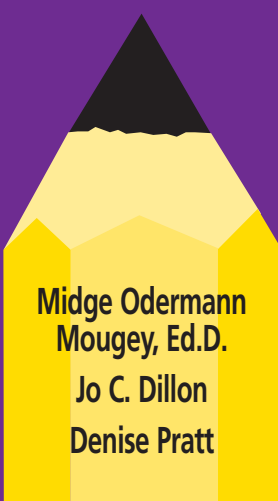
# MORE TOOLS for Teaching Social Skills in SCHOOL

Grades 3-12

▶ **35** Lesson Plans with Activities,

Role-Plays, Worksheets, and Skill Posters to

Improve Student Behavior



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# Lesson Plans for Social Skills Instruction

*Why won't Frankie ever follow my instructions?*

*If Lilly would just listen the FIRST time I explain the assignments, we wouldn't waste so much time.*

*Can Connor ever stop complaining?*

*If that child went a week without forgetting something, I'd go speechless from shock.*

**Y**ou may never have uttered thoughts like these in the classroom, but you've surely said (maybe even screamed) them in your head. Student behavior, from the mildly irritating to the absolutely infuriating, can drive even the most committed teacher to distraction.

Today's classrooms are filled with students who have divergent life experiences, histories and families. As a result, the social skills and social abilities they display are neither universal nor uniform. If you expect or assume that students should know how to follow instructions, stay on task, work cooperatively, communicate honestly or manage their emotions, you shouldn't. Many will walk into your classroom lacking the skills necessary to be consistently successful in school. Some may possess a range of social skills but struggle to adapt or transfer them to the classroom. Others simply have had no formal instruction or guidance. They rely on their own habits and devices to get their needs met. Unfortunately, these habits do not always conform to the standards of acceptable behavior. And the more time you

have to spend correcting misbehaviors, the less time you have to teach academics.

The lesson plans in *More Tools for Teaching Social Skills in School* are designed to help you empower every student to be more successful, regardless of circumstance or environment. Through social skills instruction, you can give students more behavioral choices, choices that are healthier and more productive for them and for you. Teaching young people new ways of thinking, new ways of feeling good and new ways of behaving can have a transformative effect in your classroom. Research shows that social skills instruction, in addition to other classroom management practices, can decrease aggressive behavior and increase academic engagement. When students learn to use the skills outlined in this workbook, they can help you create the productive, collaborative and cooperative learning environment that you desire and they deserve.

## How to Use This Workbook

Each of the thirty-five lesson plans focuses on a specific social skill, broken down into its behavioral steps: Greeting Others, Setting Goals, Being Prepared for Class, Following Instructions, Staying on Task, Getting the Teacher's Attention, Contributing to Discussions (Joining in a Conversation), Listening to Others, Completing Homework, Making a Request (Asking a Favor), Accepting "No" for an Answer, Accepting Criticism or a Consequence, Disagreeing Appropriately,

Advocating for Oneself, Making an Appropriate Complaint, Choosing Appropriate Words to Say, Accepting Decisions of Authority, Using Anger-Control Strategies, Making an Apology (Saying You're Sorry), Expressing Empathy and Understanding for Others, Giving Compliments, Showing Appreciation, Accepting Awards and Honors, Accepting Compliments, Going to an Assembly, Accepting Winning Appropriately, Accepting Defeat or Loss, Choosing Appropriate Friends, Setting Appropriate Boundaries, Extending an Offer or Invitation, Declining an Offer or Invitation Graciously, Resisting Negative Peer Pressure, Responding to/Reporting Inappropriate Talk or Touch, Reporting Other Youths' Behavior (Peer Reporting) and Communicating Honestly.

We have included many of the sixteen skills that are the foundation of Boys Town's Well-Managed Classroom, and these lesson plans give you different teaching activities than those found in the original *Tools for Teaching Social Skills in School* book. You also will find more than a dozen new skills, from the basic to the complex. Some lessons cover "simple" social skills that may be of particular interest to elementary educators. However, if you teach

in junior or senior high school, you can still use these lessons as reviews for students and to reinforce your behavioral expectations. Other lessons focus on more advanced skills. Because so many student misbehaviors and classroom meltdowns result from unhealthy relationships, especially with teens, there are lessons to help you address problems related to inappropriate language and unhealthy boundaries.

All of the lessons follow the same general outline, beginning with "Teacher Notes." The notes include background information about a skill and its relevance to the classroom. Where appropriate, additional suggestions on how or when to teach a skill are provided. After the notes section, the content is presented in the form of a Proactive Teaching interaction. This is where the lesson reads like a script, one you can edit accordingly to fit the age and developmental level of your students.

Proactive Teaching is an instructional strategy you can use to introduce new social skills to students, reinforce the skills they are learning and prepare them for future situations where they will need to use specific skills or behaviors. In a Proactive Teaching interaction, you begin by introducing the skill. Each les-

## Posters for Elementary Grades

If you are an elementary-grade teacher or work with special-needs students, the CD also contains fourteen alternative posters that may be useful when teaching the following skills: Greeting Others, Following Instructions, Staying on Task, Getting the Teacher's Attention, Talking with Others (Contributing to Discussions/Joining in a Conversation), Listening, Asking for What You Want (Making a Request/Asking a Favor), Accepting "No" for an Answer, Accepting Criticism, Disagreeing, Giving Criticism (Making an Appropriate Complaint), Saying You're Sorry (Making an Apology), Giving Compliments and Accepting Compliments.

These posters use simpler language that makes it easier for some students to understand, learn and remember the individual skill and its steps. In some instances, the skill name has been simplified or shortened and the number of skill steps has been reduced. When using one of these alternative posters, we recommend teaching the lesson using the same simplified language so there is greater consistency and less confusion.

son gives you a technique, along with talking points, that will focus students' attention on the skill and help them understand its relevance in their lives.

After introducing students to the skill, explain its behavioral steps. (A poster for each skill and its steps can be reproduced using the enclosed CD. Post them in your classroom to remind students how to follow and use the skills.)

The behavioral steps are numbered in the sequence in which they are performed. Additional talking points are provided so you can explain or clarify certain behaviors for students, such as defining "calm and pleasant" or describing an empathy statement. After reviewing the skill steps, the Proactive Teaching interaction concludes when you give students a reason, or rationale, for using the skill. Multiple rationales are included with each lesson. You can use all of the rationales or pick and choose those that have the most relevance and meaning to your students. After a skill is introduced and its behavioral steps are explained and rationales provided, you can move on to activities that reinforce the lesson and teach students how, when, where and why to use a skill.

## **Role-Plays, Suggested Activities and Think Sheets**

In our experience, role-play is an effective instructional tool for helping students, especially younger ones, practice a skill's behavioral steps in a safe, controlled environment. Several true-to-life role-play scenarios, representing a range of age and developmental levels, are included in each lesson. If any scenario is not relevant or age-appropriate for your classroom, you can modify it accordingly or decide not to use that role-play with your students.

While role-plays can be excellent practice, not all students consider them to be enjoyable learning activities. Some students, particularly

in junior and senior high, may view role-play as embarrassing or an excuse to act out. They will intentionally engage in antics that distract from the learning, or they simply won't participate. If this is a concern for you, each lesson also includes "Suggested Activities" that you can use in conjunction with, or as a replacement for, role-play.

Each suggested activity corresponds to a specific subject area and illustrates a way for you to integrate a skill into an academic lesson plan, homework assignment or other classroom function that is part of the school day. This strategy is called "blended teaching" and is an effective way to introduce a skill when there is limited time to teach a lesson plan by itself. In addition, blended teaching helps students see how these abstract concepts work in the real world and are relevant to their lives. Again, you can modify any activity to match the content you are covering in class, or you can use an activity to develop your own ideas and create something entirely new.

Each lesson also includes a "Think Sheet" handout (which you can reproduce, along with the role-play scenarios, using the enclosed CD). The think sheets ask a series of questions that encourage students to reflect thoughtfully about how a skill applies to their lives in and outside of the classroom. In the elementary grades, you may want students to work in groups to answer the questions or discuss them aloud in class to aid understanding. With older students, the think sheets can be assigned as homework or used as a group activity or a conversation sheet for large-group discussion. However you choose to use the think sheets, they can be a logical way to wrap up your teaching and transition to another lesson or activity.

While think sheets are a valuable component in teaching social skills, you also can use them as a tool for correcting behavioral mistakes. When a student struggles with a particular skill or repeats the same misbehavior, you can have

him or her redo the relevant think sheet(s). In this context, the “re-think sheet” is part of a negative consequence. Repeating the exercise helps reinforce a skill and your behavioral expectations. Additionally, the time and energy a student spends redoing the questionnaire may be enough of a consequence to motivate positive changes in behavior.

These lesson plans provide a simple and efficient way to teach essential social skills. As students acquire and use these skills, their behaviors will shift in healthier, more positive directions. This behavioral shift, while good for students, is equally advantageous for you. One obvious benefit: Fewer disruptions equal more time for instruction. In addition, these lessons can help you forge deeper connections with students, making it easier to work through and move past behavioral mistakes. And, most importantly, you can ultimately create a learning community where everyone gives and shows respect, feels emotionally secure, strives for the same goals and finds real success.

## About the Authors

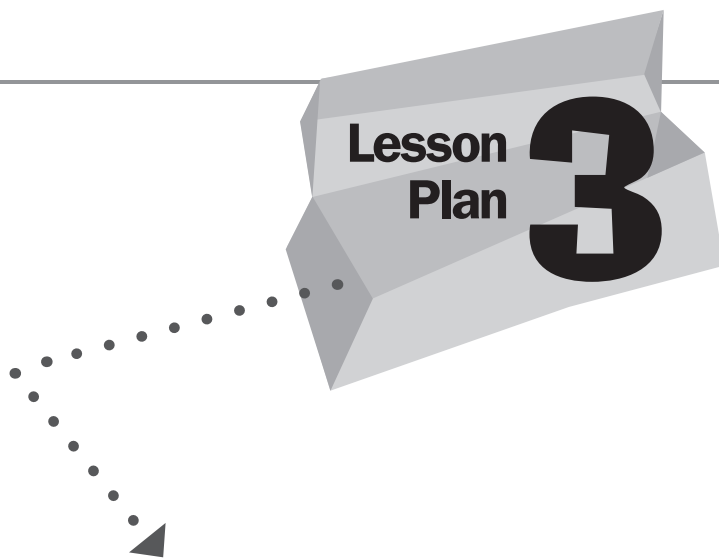
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# Being Prepared for Class

## Teacher Notes

Perhaps the biggest cause for delay and unnecessary distraction in the classroom is unprepared students. These individuals never seem to have the right books, or they frequently forget supplies or spend the first several minutes of every class period socializing and loafing about. While some of this behavior may be attributable to a student's laid-back attitude or personality, that's not a sufficient reason to excuse or ignore the behavior.

One strategy to help students overcome their tendency to be disorganized is to teach them how to be responsible. This skill lesson provides a concrete way to teach students about responsibility. Many unnecessary classroom delays or disruptions will fade away if students can become more responsible, and you will be rewarded with more instruction time.

## Proactive Teaching Interaction

### Introduce the Skill

Start a class discussion by asking students to define what it means to be prepared for class. Have students give examples of being prepared for your class and not being prepared. After the discussion, ask students to brainstorm reasons why it is important for them to use this skill. Reasons can include:

- Keeps the class on schedule by eliminating delays that cut into instruction time
- Gives you more time in class to read, complete assignments or work on projects
- Makes class less stressful



- Sets a good example for others
- Keeps you out of trouble, avoids negative consequences

## **Describe the Appropriate Behavior or Skill Steps**

### **Being Prepared for Class**

- 1. Gather all necessary books, papers, homework and writing implements.**
  - Make sure you have a sharpened pencil or pen that works.
- 2. Be on time for class.**
  - This usually means you are sitting at your desk and ready to work when the bell rings or class begins.
- 3. Present homework and assignments when the teacher asks for them.**
- 4. Write down assignments and homework to complete.**
  - Use an assignment notebook or folder to write down or hold the assignments you're given, and remember to take the notebook or folder home with you every day.

### **Give a Reason or Rationale**

Being prepared for class is essential to your academic success. When you show up on time, have your materials and are attentive, it's much easier to stay on task and gather all of the information you need. If you're always coming late to class or forgetting your notes and assignments, you are much more likely to be distracted (and be a distraction), miss critical information and earn penalties for tardiness or late assignments. Other benefits of being prepared for class include:

- You can apply this skill to work settings, making you a more valuable employee.
- You avoid the embarrassment of always having to ask others to share their books and supplies with you in class.
- You are less likely to fall behind, especially in fast-paced and heavy-content courses.
- You develop a reputation as someone who is responsible and dependable.

## **Suggested Activities**

**Language Arts:** Write the poem *Preparation* by Paul Dunbar on an overhead or the board. Read the poem aloud, and then ask students to interpret its meaning.

Have students write an original poem using preparation as their theme.

### *Preparation*

The little bird sits in the nest and sings  
A shy, soft song to the morning light;  
And it flutters a little and prunes its wings.  
The song is halting and poor and brief,  
And the fluttering wings scarce stir a leaf;  
But the note is a prelude to sweeter things,  
And the busy bill and the flutter slight  
Are proving the wings for a bolder flight!

**History:** Preparation can be the difference between great success and complete failure. Have students prepare a written or oral report about an historical event or program that succeeded or failed because of the planning. Examples can include the D-Day invasion, Marshall Plan, Bay of Pigs, etc.

## **Group Role-Play**

In addition to individual role-play scenarios, this skill lends itself to large-group role-play. Specifically, you can design a role-play around how you want your students to come prepared to your classroom. Start by creating a procedure that describes the behavior expectations you have for coming prepared to class, and then have students practice the procedure. Here are two examples:

### **Coming Prepared to Class**

- Have all of your materials with you when entering the classroom.
- Go directly to your seat.
- Get your materials out and put them on your desk.
- Sit quietly while the teacher gives instructions.

### **What to Do if You're Late to Class**

- Go to the office (or back to the previous teacher).
- Use a pleasant voice.
- Request a pass to class.
- Walk to class.
- Enter quietly.
- Give the pass to the teacher.
- Take your seat quietly.

# Being Prepared for Class

## Suggested Role-Plays

### Teacher Note:

Have students select one of the following scenarios to role-play in class.

- 1.** On Friday, your teacher tells you to come to class on Monday with two stories from a local newspaper and one story from any news magazine. Say or describe what you need to do to remember this assignment over the weekend, and what you need to do Monday to show your teacher that you are ready for class.
- 2.** On Monday, your teacher tells you there will be an open-book test on Wednesday. You also will be able to use your class notes. Show or describe what you need to do so you are ready for the test.
- 3.** Next week, your gym class is going to a local swimming pool. Transportation will be provided and there is no fee. However, you are responsible for anything else you might need. Describe what you have to do to be prepared for next week's gym class.

# Being Prepared for Class

## Think Sheet

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

What does being prepared for class mean or look like when you are going to...

- band class?
  
- physical education class?
  
- science class?

Why is it important to know how to be prepared for class?

How does the skill of **Being Prepared for Class** help you at school?

How can you use the skill of **Being Prepared for Class** to do a chore at home, volunteer in the community or hold a job?

# **Being Prepared for Class**

- 1. Gather all necessary books, papers, homework and writing implements.**
- 2. Be on time for class.**
- 3. Present homework and assignments when the teacher asks for them.**
- 4. Write down assignments and homework to complete.**