

Classroom Guidance: A Few of My Favorite Things

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**Julie Baumgart, NCC, NCSC
School Counselor
julie.baumgart@webo.k12.in.us**

The Method to My Madness...

My philosophy: Classroom Guidance is the single best way to connect with ALL students in the building while still performing a counseling role (imagine that!). To that end, when I worked 3 days/week in an elementary setting, I devoted one day per week to classroom guidance, enabling me to visit each classroom on a monthly basis. As my caseload for individual and group students was so high (like everyone else's), this left me very little prep time, so I needed to find an efficient way of organizing my classroom lessons.

I begin the year by selecting a counseling theme for each month. Typically:

- August/September Meet the Counselor (K-2) and Test Prep (3-6)
- October Drug/Alcohol/Tobacco
- November Bullying
- December Kindness/Friendship
- January Diversity
- February Tattling (K-2) and Careers (3-6)
- March Teacher's Choice
- April Teacher's Choice
- May Teacher's Choice (K-5)/ Middle School Prep (6)

Frequent Teacher's Choice topics are honesty, responsibility, respect, listening, anger, teasing...but if you ask, they'll always be able to tell you their current "hot topic".

"My Counseling Binder" contains dozens of classroom lessons

- Organized by grade level
- Labeled by topic
- Named/Dated for each time the lesson was used

Once I have chosen the monthly themes, I have essentially completed my lesson planning! It becomes a matter of pulling that lesson out of the binder and gathering my supplies.

I have written some of my own lessons, but many are adapted or stolen from my counseling colleagues. I attend workshops, conferences, etc. whenever possible and make it a point to always come away with something—usually several things. Then it's simply a matter of choosing where it best fits in the binder.

Here are some of my favorites...

Lesson: The Crayon Box That Talked

Grade Level: K

Time: 30 minutes

Theme: Diversity

Materials: *The Crayon Box That Talked* by Shane DeRolf
 Crayons
 2 Large Sheets of Butcher Paper

1. Invite students to draw one class picture using only blue crayons. (One child draws house, another child draws sun, another adds a flower, etc.)
2. Read *The Crayon Box That Talked*. Discuss diversity.
 - a. What does diversity mean?
 - b. What are some things that are better with diversity?
 - c. What would be the problems if everyone was the same?
3. Invite remaining students who have not drawn (one at a time) to re-draw the same picture using all colors.
 - a. Which picture do you think is prettier?
 - b. Both pictures have the same things in them. Why is this picture better?

Picture Subjects

House

Tree

Sun

Pond/Lake

Grass

Girl

Boy

Dog

Flower (as many as needed to allow each child an opportunity to draw)

Rainbow (teacher/counselor should do this one)

Grade Level: 1

Time: 30 minutes

Theme: Listening/Following Directions

Materials: None

1. Introduce myself and invite the children to stand.
2. Play Simon Says (5 minutes)
 - a. No one is “out”, but remember if you “should” have been out
3. Discussion (5 minutes)
 - a. What happened if you weren’t listening/paying close attention?
4. Break into small groups (approx 6 per group) and sit in circles
5. Play telephone (5-10 minutes)
6. Discussion (5 minutes)
 - a. Everyone tried hard, but message still changed—numerous places for the change to happen (can introduce the idea of rumors if needed)
7. Wrap Up (5 minutes)
 - a. How are the 2 games alike/different?
 - i. Both rely on listening skills
 - ii. Aloud vs. whisper
 - iii. Hearing only vs. sight and hearing
 - iv. Impact of distractions
 - b. How would I know someone was being a good listener? (physical cues)
 - c. What times in your day do you need to be an active listener and why is that important?

Lesson: *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*

Grade Level: 2

Time: 30 minutes

Theme: Anger Management

Materials: *Alexander...* by Judith Viorst
Anger Ball (see below)

1. Begin by discussing what types of things make you angry.
2. Read *Alexander...* (Invite students to chime in with “Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day” and make a very mean face every time the phrase appears.)
 - Discuss what happens to their bodies when making the angry face. (Face turns red, tension in neck, clenched teeth, clenched fists, etc.)
 - Discuss how those body cues can help us identify when anger is beginning.
3. Use anger ball to identify and rehearse strategies for anger management.
 - Make your own anger ball using beach ball and sharpie--List strategies for controlling anger on the ball.
 - Students toss ball to one another and must read and demonstrate whatever is closest to their right hand.

Lesson: Dollar Bill Jump

(This activity was stolen from *Activities That Teach* by Tom Jackson)

Grade Level: 3

Time: 15-20 minutes (generally paired w/another related activity)

Theme: Drugs/Alcohol

Materials: Masking tape line on floor

1. Explain to students the task: To jump over the line while holding onto their toes. Ask students who is pretty sure he/she can successfully complete the task. (Most will think they can.)
2. Invite students who wish to try to come to front.
3. Discussion.
 - a. How hard did this look? How hard was it?
 - b. Impairment by drugs/alcohol can make you think something is pretty easy.
 - c. Numerous additional discussion questions listed in *Activities That Teach*.

Lesson: Left Out

(This activity was stolen from *Activities That Teach* by Tom Jackson.)

Grade Level: 4**Time: 30 minutes****Theme: Cliques**

Materials: None (but will need a large space to move around)

1. Explain rules/game play.
 - a. Leader will call out number and students must quickly move into groups of that number. Students who cannot make a group of that number are “out”.
 - b. No running.
 - c. In case of discrepancy over who is “out”, group must decide.
2. Call out numbers (I always start with the total number of students).
3. Discuss dynamics as game is completed.
 - a. How did it feel to be “out”?
 - b. What did you observe about how the groups formed? (Frequently, groups of friends will stick together...remaining students of single gender will group together...someone will “lead” the group by inviting people in or kicking people out...)
 - c. What is a clique?
 - d. What can this activity demonstrate about cliques?
 - e. More questions in *Activities That Teach*.
4. Play additional rounds as time permits.

Lesson: You Are Special

Grade Level: 5

Time: 30 minutes

Theme: Friendship/No Put-Downs

Materials: Gold Stars and Gray Dots (50 of each)
You Are Special by Max Lucado

1. Instruct students you will ask them a multiple choice question. They are to move to different corners of the room to designate their answers.
 - What is your favorite sport? (baseball, basketball, football, soccer)
2. Distribute gold stars to one group randomly, claiming they are “same as me”, and gray dots to one group who “likes something I don’t”, etc.
3. Ask second question and distribute more stars and dots. (Call attention to how there are stars and dots in the same group now.
 - What is your favorite food? (ice cream, pizza, chips, chocolate)
4. After asking the third question and distributing stars and dots, additional stars and/or dots may be handed out for “no reason” (you have a lot of dots-here’s one more, etc.)
 - How many brothers/sisters do you have (do not count yourself)? (0, 1, 2, 3+)
5. Continue with questions as desired.
 - What month were you born? (Jan-Mar, Apr-Jun, Jul-Sep, Oct-Dec)

DISCUSSION

1. How did it feel when I handed out stars and dots?
2. Did anyone receive all stars? All dots? How did that feel?
3. Did anyone not receive any stars or dots?
4. Raise your hand if you have ever seen anyone “get a gray dot” in real life. *Maybe someone dropped their books in the hall and someone laughed at them...maybe someone spilled their lunch...maybe someone wasn’t very good at a game in PE or recess...What did you do? How do you think they felt?*

Read *You Are Special*

Parting Message:

We give stars and dots often for meaningless things, or things over which people have no control. Maybe someone doesn’t have the newest clothes, maybe they look different than you... We need to **avoid giving dots**, and we need to **stick up for someone** when they’ve received a dot.

BOOK CLUBS

Issues of peer relationships and academic success are very common in the upper elementary grades. The counselor's book clubs will allow students to address some of these issues in a small group setting. They can learn to identify some of the problem warning signs and practice strategies and solutions.

There will be eight different book clubs, each covering a different issue (homework, test taking, organization, stress, manners, anger, cliques, and bullying). In addition to parent or teacher referrals, students would be allowed to sign up for a book club, which would take place during recess once a week for 4-6 weeks. Students would read aloud sections of the book and then discuss and strategize solutions.

How to Do Homework Without Throwing Up
True or False? Tests Stink!
Bullies are a Pain in the Brain
Dude, That's Rude! (Get Some Manners)
Get Organized Without Losing It
Stress Can Really Get On Your Nerves
Cliques, Phonies, and Other Baloney
How to Take the Grrr Out of Anger

MISCELLANEOUS RESOURCES

- ASCA-- www.schoolcounselor.org
- State SCAs

- www.teachingtolerance.org
 - Curriculum Kits containing video, teacher's guide, etc.
 - Classroom Resources (lesson plans)
 - Monthly Magazine
 - One World Poster Set
 - Mix It Up at Lunch

- www.forbetterlife.org
 - Billboard Posters
 - Commercials

- www.legacyproject.org
 - Lesson Plans
 - Grandparent's Day
- outreach@sesame.org (email)
 - Tool Kits
- www.militaryonesource.mil
 - Resources for military families

**More of My Favorite Things
BIBLIOTHERAPY**

TITLE	AUTHOR	GRADE LEVEL	THEME
Finders Keepers for Franklin	Bourgeois, Paulette	K-2	Honesty
Franklin's Secret Club	Bourgeois, Paulette	K-2	Friendship/Cliques
The Sissy Duckling	Fierstein, Harvey	2-4	Diversity
Today I Feel Silly	Curtis, Jamie Lee	K-2	Feelings
Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day	Viorst, Judith	2	Anger
Mean Soup	Everitt, Betsy	K-2	Anger
The Other Side	Woodson, Jacqueline	5	Diversity
Tacky the Penguin	Lester, Helen	1	Diversity
The Sneetches	Seuss, Dr.	2	Diversity
Too Many Daves	Seuss, Dr.	2	Diversity
The Crayon Box That Talked	DeRolf, Shane	K	Diversity
Something Special	McPhail, David	1	Self-Esteem/Uniqueness
You Are Special	Lucado, Max	5	Kindness/Friendship
The Goodness Gorillas	Chicken Soup for Little Souls	3-5	Kindness/Friendship
Alice and Greta	Simmons, Steven	2-4	Kindness/Golden Rule
Dream	Bosak, Susan	4-6	Goal Setting
Dear Mrs. LaRue	Teague, Mark	3-4	Perspective
The Kissing Hand	Penn, Audrey	K-1	Starting School/Separation from Parents
The Quiltmaker's Gift	Brumbeau, Jeff	2-4	Generosity/Kindness
Wemberly Worried	Henkes, Kevin	1-3	Worrying
I Did It, I'm Sorry	Buehner, Caralyn	2-4	Decision Making
Enemy Pie	Munson, Ellen	2-4	Friendship
Win or Lose By How You Choose	Sheindlin, Judge Judy	3	Decision Making
Andrew's Angry Words	Lachner, Dorothea	2-4	Anger
The Giving Tree	Silverstein, Shel	4-6	Kindness/Generosity
Simon's Hook	Burnett, Karen Gedig	1-3	Teasing/Put-Downs
My Mouth Is A Volcano	Cook, Julia	1-3	Interrupting
Edward Fudwupper Fibbed Big	Breathed, Berkeley	1-4	Lying
Wanted: Best Friend	Monson, A. M.	1-3	Friendship
How To Be A Friend	Brown, Laura Krasny and Marc	1-3	Friendship
The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs	Scieszka, Jon	2-4	Perspective/Point of View

Mistakes That Worked	Jones, Charlotte	5-6	Persistence
King of the Playground	Naylor, Phyllis	1-3	Bullying/Bossiness
The Recess Queen	O'Neill, Alexis	2	Bullying/Bossiness
Pigsty	Teague, Mark	K-2	Sloppiness
Armadillo Tattletale	Ketteman, Helen	2-4	Tattling
Chrysanthemum	Henkes, Kevin	1	Bullying/Friendship
My Secret Bully	Ludwig, Trudy	4	Bullying
The Pain and The Great One	Blume, Judy	3-5	Fairness/Sibling Issues
Charlie the Caterpillar	DeLuise, Dom	2-4	Friendship
Owliver	Kraus, Robert	1-3	Careers
Band Aid Chicken	Henton, Becky Rangel	K	Bullying
Stand Tall, Molly Lou Melon	Lovell, Patty	1	Bullying/Self-Esteem
The Bully Blockers Club	Bateman, Teresa	2	Bullying
Crickle Crack	Cosgrove, Stephen	2	Drugs

CDS/VIDEOS

TITLE	AUTHOR	GRADE LEVEL	THEME
Howard Gray (song)	Domann, Lee	5-6	Bullying
Bullies Are a Pain In the Brain (video)	Romain, Trevor	3	Bullying
Broken Toy (video)	NCYI	6	Bullying

CURRICULUM

TITLE	AUTHOR	GRADE LEVEL	THEME
I Didn't Know I Was A Bully	Richards, Melissa	4	Bullying
Activities That Teach series	Jackson, Tom	3-6	Multiple
Froggy & Friends series	Guild, Kathy	K-2	Multiple
Character Building Classroom Guidance	Martenz, Arden	4-6	Multiple
201 Amazing Mind Beggars	Bowman, Robert	4-6 (all)	Multiple
169 Awesome Activities	Martenz, Arden	All	Multiple