



A Handbook
for all
Beginning
Teachers

**A HANDBOOK
FOR BEGINNING TEACHERS**

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CONTENTS

	Page
Prayer of the Teacher	5
General Scope	6
Stumbling Blocks	7
Teaching	9
Good Order	14
Punishments	16
Politeness	18
Counseling	19
The Teacher's Ten Commandments	21
Athletics	21
Social Activities	23
Prefecting	24
Extracurricular Activities	25
Teacher's Check-List	27-29

FOREWORD

The material contained herein is not to be considered a talisman for beginning teachers but only an aid in pointing out some of the major difficulties the teacher may face and the things he should avoid to forestall these difficulties. Limited space curtails any lengthy explanations of each point but it is hoped that the suggestions made are self-explanatory. Everything that happens in a teacher's daily routine could not be covered but only the notable points were considered.

This is only a skeleton outline of *do's* and *don'ts* and it is presumed that the beginning teacher will make a self-application to fit his individual needs. The only way to learn to teach is to teach, but it is always helpful to know what to expect and what to do under any given circumstances. It is hoped that the points in this outline may be of some use in that respect.

PRAYER OF THE TEACHER BEFORE SCHOOL

Thou, O Lord, art my strength, my patience, my light and my counsel; it is Thou that makest submissive to me the children confided to my care. Abandon me not to myself for one moment. For my own conduct and for that of my pupils, grant me the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and fortitude, the spirit of knowledge and piety, the spirit of holy fear of Thee, and an ardent zeal to procure Thy glory. I unite my labors to those of Jesus Christ, and I beg the Most Blessed Virgin, St. Joseph, the Guardian Angels and St. John Baptist de la Salle to protect me in the exercise of my employment. Amen.

(Christian Brothers' Manual of Piety)

GENERAL SCOPE

It is the duty of the teacher to give each pupil a well-rounded education by developing the student spiritually, mentally and physically.

The teacher must develop the student spiritually by teaching him *how to live* according to the principles of his religion. The teacher must bring to the student the solutions of the moral problems that face him NOW as an adolescent. The good teacher does not presume that these things will be taught the student by others. He must not be squeamish about facing squarely and honestly ALL the moral problems boys encounter. He does not wait until the boy has developed a habit of evil and then attempt to apply a solution. He realizes that he must carefully expound the principles of morality so that the student understands and evil habits may be avoided.

The student will develop mentally if the teacher is patient and understanding and realizes that all his students are not blessed with the same amount of intelligence. He must use terms the boys understand and not neglect the slow pupil for the fast. He progresses from the easy to the more difficult and determines as best he can how much the pupils understand before advancing to something new.

To help the student develop physically the teacher should see that the boy maintains proper posture in class, that the room is well ventilated, and that those with poor eyesight or defective hearing are seated up front. Slovenly physical habits in the classroom are a handicap to good mental achievement and sometimes a source of disciplinary problems.

Having realized the scope of his activity in the classroom, the teacher must keep his goal in mind—that of developing the true Christian man. He will achieve this aim only if he follows the rules set up for making a good teacher.

STUMBLING BLOCKS

As a novice in the teaching profession your biggest problem may be yourself. Discouragement may quickly take hold of you when you find that you are not meeting with the success you had hoped to realize. Your enthusiasm and zeal may dwindle when you see your pupils' lack of interest in study and sometimes their unruly conduct on the campus. You will have prepared a fine lesson only to discover that the students didn't get it at all. You will be disheartened when even those for whom you did the most make no grateful return.

Pride may also hinder your good work when you discover obstacles in teaching and are not humble enough to ask for help. You may see other teachers having more success than you and doubts may arise as to your ability as a teacher. Do not expect consolations or encouragements from anyone. For the most part your students are not interested in studying and adolescents are not quick to thank you for going out of your way to help them. If you find difficulties in teaching, be man enough to ask for help from an older confrere. Your confreres will not seek you out because they may not know you are having difficulties, and, if they do, they feel they would be giving advice where no advice is wanted. Be humble and ask.

Ambition may also cause you difficulties and dissatisfactions. You may lose heart when you find that you are not appointed to positions to which you think yourself best qualified. Perhaps you feel that because of your intelligence you should be selected to handle all or most of the "bright" classes. You may also feel that your talents are being wasted and that the principal should place you where these talents could be best used. You may become disheartened because you are not "climbing" to positions of authority in the school; this leads to criticism and envy that should have no place in your life. If you have the spirit of faith, you will accept whatever classes, positions, or authority your superiors deem you should have. You will be happy in teaching only if you accept with faith whatever is offered or appointed you to do. Humanly speaking, you will find some things hard to take, but with faith they will become easy. Be ambitious, then, only for your own salvation and that of your students.

Another difficulty that may beset you as a beginner will be any "progressive" ideas you may have learned in your studies. Be convinced that the method and system used by your Religious Order or Institute is the best. It has been tested by many years of experience and no other method has proved more successful. Because of your youth and lack of experience you may feel that the method used by the older teachers is outmoded and you may insist on using "new" ideas in education which lead you to abandon the established method of teaching. Your Order or Institute has a glorious history in education, and anything you can think of has already been thought of and used or discarded—depending on its usefulness to the method set up by your Founder and his followers. Be certain then that you

adhere to the established method—in it you will find success. New *techniques* in teaching may be used provided they do not destroy the foundations and fundamental principles of the system already established by your Order or Institute.

As a beginner in teaching and even in later years you will find that the solution to all your personal difficulties will be found in the spirit of faith as expressed by your Founder.

TEACHING

“What is a greater work than to direct the minds and form the character of the young? I hold, with certainty, that no painter, no statuary, nor any other artist does such excellent work as he who moulds the minds of youth.”
(Office of St. La Salle)

Preparation:

1. The teacher should have his lessons well prepared so that he may be able to keep the students occupied during the entire class time.
2. Determine beforehand how much time you wish to allot to explanations, questions, written work, and the like, and give yourself that last few minutes for a definite explanation of the homework assigned.
3. It is most helpful to beginning teachers to have a Plan Book whereby each day's lesson is written down for the entire week. This book can be used in class as a guide during the lesson.

Assignments:

1. Do not assign homework just for the sake of giving the pupils something to do. Have a definite objective in mind.
2. Correct all work done by the pupils and see to it that it is returned to them. If they discover it is not corrected and recorded, they will do poor work or none at all.
3. On occasion a boy may have a legitimate, plausible, and reasonable excuse for not doing his work, or for not doing it on time, or for doing only part of it. An agreement should then be worked out between pupil and teacher. Either the boy can be completely exempted, or he must make up all or part of the work missed.
4. Be careful not to overload the student with cumbersome and lengthy assignments for one night's work. Remember the boy has other assignments he must do for other classes.

Grading:

1. Keep a strict account of all grades in your record book so that you will have a definite standard by which to make out your report card.
2. Play no favorites in grading, for the students are quick to note any unfairness; especially do not grade a pupil for disciplinary reasons but for knowledge only. Department grades should be given separately.
3. Here are descriptions that may be of help in determining the A, B, C, D, and F students:

The A Pupil:

- a. Is careful, thorough, and prompt in the preparation of all required work.

- b. Is quick and resourceful in utilizing suggestions for supplementary work and activities.
- c. Works independently and has sufficient interest and initiative to undertake original projects beyond the assigned work.
- d. Uses his time well.
- e. Does not guess.
- f. Is careful to express thoughts clearly and accurately.
- g. Shows leadership in classroom activities.
- h. Has excellent self-control and effective study habits.

The B Pupil:

- a. Prepares all assignments carefully.
- b. Is conscientious and dependable.
- c. Requires no urging to have work done on time.
- d. Shows consistent interest.
- e. Responds readily when called upon.
- f. Makes a practice of doing all the work assigned and makes some use of suggestions for supplementary work.
- g. Has good study habits of routine assignments.
- h. Is loyal, dependable and helpful in class activities.

The C Pupil:

- a. Does good work, but requires considerable direction and stimulation from the teacher.
- b. Is usually dependable and cooperative.
- c. Has good intentions, though interest is not always keen.
- d. Does not show a great deal of concern in following his subject beyond minimum requirements.

e. Responds to encouragement and guidance, though sometimes inclined to be careless or slow in accomplishments.

f. Needs to be prompted by frequent questions in reports or discussions before the class.

g. Should develop more independent habits of study.

The D Pupil:

a. Does work regarded as passable according to minimum requirements for course.

b. Lacks in concentration in study.

c. Fails frequently to respond in recitation or prepared work.

d. Requires special help and encouragement constantly.

e. Shows some improvement in study habits during the semester and sufficient mastery of fundamental work to warrant the opinion that he will grow more through advancement than through repetition of the subject.

f. Lacks sense of responsibility.

g. Is too easily diverted from any task.

h. Is decidedly irregular in his attention and application.

The F Pupil:

a. Accomplishes less than the fundamental minimum essentials for a "D".

b. Needs to spend more time on the subject; repetition of subject advisable.

c. Shows inconsistent effort to work up to capacity.

d. Has study habits that are poor and ineffective.

e. Either will not, or cannot, hold his attention to his work.

f. Is not loyal, dependable and helpful in classroom activities.

Presentation:

1. When using the blackboard the teacher should not have his back to the pupils. Turn a bit to the side and write; stopping now and again to get a good look at the class.

2. Use the question and answer method as proposed by your Institute and do not lecture to high school or grade school pupils.

3. Make good use of whatever visual aids you have available but in doing so continue to maintain good order in the room.

4. The teacher should present his lesson clearly in a tone of voice that is neither too loud nor too soft. It is irritating to the students if the teacher is continually screaming at them or, on the other hand, if they must strain to be able to hear him.

5. Some teachers are able to allow discussions in class without the pupils getting out of hand; others find that it creates disorder in a room. If the teacher is not able to snap the class to order at the first sign of unrest then he should not permit discussion.

6. Do not joke with the class if you cannot bring the class to order immediately afterwards.

7. Speak as little as possible in the classroom. Your silence will insure the silence of the class. Speak only when there is a manifest necessity.

8. The teacher should give as much attention to the slow pupils as he does to those who are fast in learning.

9. Be insistent that all the students have everything they need for class work—books, paper, pencil, pen, etc. Do not allow the students to move their desks together because a boy forgot his books. Borrowing paper, pencils, pens; and other material should not be permitted.

GOOD ORDER

“Good order consists in the silence of the pupils; in a becoming and uniform behavior; and in their attention to the lessons given them.”

(Management of the Christian Schools)

Speaking:

1. Teach the pupils distinctly so they know exactly what they are supposed to do. In this way you will avoid answering many unnecessary questions. If necessary, use the blackboard to show the students by example.

2. Do not allow any boy to speak in class unless he raises his hand and is recognized by the teacher. Be very definite about this.

3. When questioning the class check to see that you are including everyone and not just one section or group.

4. Do not permit one student to ask too many questions in one lesson because you may become engrossed in answering him and thus neglect the others who in turn will lose interest and start to play. When answering any question continue to let your eyes roam about the room so that you may check the attention of the entire class.

Helps To Good Order :

1. Never leave the students to themselves in the classroom.
2. When collecting written work have the students pass the papers up the row from the back to the front. Use the same procedure in returning papers to the students only starting from the front to the back. Don't allow a student to walk about the room collecting or distributing the papers.
3. Make sure the pupils have on top of their desks only those materials that are necessary for the lesson. Extra books, papers, trinkets, and the like should be cleared away.
4. Be sure that your classroom is kept neat and clean, e.g., no papers on the floor, etc. See that you have all the necessary equipment for teaching—textbooks, chalk, erasers.
5. The teacher should avoid making any gestures or noises which might distract the pupils while they are occupied with their lessons.
6. Ordinarily do not allow the students to come up to the teacher's desk during class time for explanations or anything else. On occasion, when the entire class is busy, it may be permitted to have a student approach the desk for help but only one student at a time and under conditions that are not disturbing to the class.
7. Do not attempt to exchange "wisecracks" with the students as you may be the loser and the discipline of the class will be weakened.
8. After the class prayer begin class work immediately and briskly. If you hesitate for any length of time the students will begin to talk.

9. Do not permit students to speak out in class unless recognized by the teacher.
10. No student should be allowed to wander around the classroom to borrow materials from other students.
11. Watch most carefully those students seated at the rear of the room.

PUNISHMENTS

“A Brother should never make use of punishment except it be to lead the pupil to correct himself; never should he employ it to gratify his own personal resentment.”

(Management of the Christian Schools)

Severity:

1. Do not inflict punishments that are too severe. Be careful that in the heat of impatience you do not “lose your head” and assign a punishment that is impossible to fulfill and one which you will have to retract.
2. In punishing, assign a short written theme or some work in mathematics. In this way the pupil may benefit from the assignment.
3. Corporal punishment is forbidden and is a certain sign that you have lost control of yourself and the good discipline of your class.
4. Such punishments as kneeling out in front of the class or extending one’s arms, etc., are unbecoming and only distract the entire class.
5. Before punishing stop and think if you are justified in leveling such a punishment.

6. Do not send a student from the room to the office at the least provocation. If this is done too frequently it is an indication that your authority has weakened or you have lost complete control of the class.

7. If you must keep an entire class after school, make certain that you do not leave them in the room alone. You must be there!

Times:

1. Do not punish too frequently because it loses the desired effect.

2. Remember that the pupil has homework he must do, and penances that are too long and too frequent interfere with his ordinary school work.

3. Avoid keeping a student for too long a time after school. Most parents expect the student home soon after school is dismissed and they will phone the office if the student is unreasonably delayed.

Avoiding Punishments:

1. You can avoid punishments by maintaining very careful supervision in your classroom.

2. Determine the temperament of each pupil in your class because the fault committed may be the result of such temperament and not done through malice.

3. If you are in command of your class a simple reprimand conveyed by looks, gestures, or by words is sufficient to keep a pupil in line.

4. In making your class seating chart, surround the usual troublemakers with students who are always very self-controlled and orderly.

5. Keep the class busy right from the start answering your questions or doing some written work. This will give the pupils no time to become restless or frivolous.

POLITENESS

“Next to Religion, nothing appears to be of more importance than good breeding and politeness.”

(Management of the Christian Schools)

Salutations:

1. Be strict in demanding that the students address you as Brother and answer all questions with “Yes, Brother” or “No, Brother.” In this way you will gain their respect and avoid disciplinary problems.

2. Do not permit yourself or the pupils to give or use nicknames or ridicule the natural defects of others. Boys are inclined to be cruel in this matter and often destroy the goodness and confidence in those who are the objects of such ridicule.

3. See that the pupils extend to each other and to older persons the proper courtesies at all school functions. Unbecoming laughter, “wisecracks,” ungentlemanly posture or gestures should be corrected immediately.

Personal Appearance:

1. Demand that the students always be neat and clean in their personal appearance. Slovenly dress, if permitted, often leads to disorder in the classroom, assemblies, dances, etc. If the student feels that he may dress in any fashion, he will take for granted that he may conduct himself as he pleases.

2. Be exact in your own personal appearance so as to give example to the pupils.

Respect:

1. Do not permit the students to handle you or call you by a nickname. No disrespect should be tolerated.
2. Don't try to be popular or "palsy-walsy" with the pupils. This only leads to disrespect and disorder in the classroom.
3. If the students realize you respect them, they in turn will respect you.
4. Have the class stand at attention when any adult enters the room and have them listen courteously to what is said.
5. Reprimand sternly any student who is in the habit of "talking back." Once this gets out of hand, your discipline is lost.
6. A respectful manner should always be maintained during class prayers.
7. Impress the students with the importance of respect for school property and particularly the desks, walls and floor of your classroom.
8. When answering a question or reading aloud, the teacher may or may not require the student to stand. Follow the custom established in the school.

COUNSELING

"Lay it up therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before how you shall answer. For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to resist and gainsay."
(St. Luke XXI, 14, 15)

General:

1. Do not attempt to extract confidences from students but wait until the student freely reveals himself.
2. You should regard all confidences as a matter of trust.
3. The students will voluntarily speak of personal matters only after they know by your actions and by what you say that you will keep their confidences.
4. Give what advice you can but do not be too dogmatic. If you are not certain of something then seek the information and advise the student later.
5. Do not be “shocked” at what the student might say or reveal to you. Remember he is seeking help and expects a sympathetic listener. Any “pained” attitude on your part will only lead the boy to believe he approached the wrong person.

Formal:

1. Formal counseling consists in calling the student for a personal interview at regular intervals.
2. This form of counseling usually takes place in a definite room or place and regular file cards of information on the student are kept.

Informal:

1. Informal counseling is that which takes place at any time and any place.
2. It often happens that the student feels more at ease to approach you on the football field, the basketball courts, track, gym, locker room, in the yard, or anywhere on or off the campus. Give him the opportunity to meet you under such circumstances.

THE TEACHER'S TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. Thou shalt always prepare thy lessons well.
2. Thou shalt follow the traditional method of your Order or Institute.
3. Thou shalt not speak unnecessarily in the classroom.
4. Thou shalt never leave the students unsupervised at any time.
5. Thou shalt not use corporal punishment.
6. Thou shalt be reasonable and just in punishing.
7. Thou shalt not play favorites nor be prejudiced against troublemakers.
8. Thou shalt not speak of, or by any sign to the students, show any resentment towards the school authority or any faculty member.
9. Thou shalt not expect to receive any human consolation from thy work.
10. Thou shalt remember to give good example on all occasions.

ATHLETICS

“Know you not that they that run in the race, all run indeed, but one receiveth the prize? So run that you may obtain. And every one that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible one.”
(1 Epistle to Corinthians IX, 24, 25)

General:

1. Athletics may include physical education classes, recreation at noon hour or after school, or interscholastic competition.
2. The teacher should see that all recreation is properly supervised.
3. Make the students play the games according to the rules of good sportsmanship.
4. Help the awkward, but never laugh at him.
5. Organize teams so that competition is keen and not one-sided.
6. Have as an object in all athletics the development of character.
7. Insist that all injuries, no matter how slight, be reported.

Athletic Moderator:

1. Be sure you know the physical condition of each boy participating in the sport.
2. If you are moderator of high school athletics see that you have proper protective equipment for each player.
3. Do not permit a boy to play if he is recuperating from an injury. It is not worth the risk of injuring a boy permanently for the sake of winning.
4. Have all teams travel by bus or common conveyance rather than individual cars. In this way you can easily supervise their conduct.
5. During practice sessions be around the field, court, or locker room, wherever the players are gathered.
6. If you are moderator of athletics you are also responsible for the conduct of the coaches during practice and at games.

7. See that your players are respectful to the faculty, players, and property of the other school, as well as to the officials calling the game.

8. The players represent your school and should develop a deep sense of loyalty to the school, the faculty, and the student body.

9. You should also consider yourself responsible for the moral training of your athletes. So check on their actions and language at all times. Your constant presence will add immeasurably to the moral tone of your athletes.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

"We beseech you, rebuke the unquiet, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil to any man: but ever follow that which is good toward each other and toward all men." (1 Epistle to Thessolonians V, 14, 15)

Vigilance:

1. Be very vigilant at all social affairs and make your presence known without being too conspicuous. Much trouble will be avoided if the students know you are somewhere nearby.

2. See that all dances, parties, picnics, banquets, and the like are well chaperoned by adults.

Conduct:

1. Have definite rules for all social gatherings, e.g., proper dress, gentlemanly conduct, dismissal time, and so forth.

2. It is sometimes necessary for you to instruct the students on matters of social etiquette particularly if the affair is public.

3. As moderator you should make it a point to stop all those who have a tendency to wander away from the others.
4. Do not let the students put on a social affair if they cannot meet the financial expenses in some way.
5. The usual troublemakers during school time should be watched carefully at social functions.

PREFECTING

“See that you despise not one of these little ones, for their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father, and because I have come for their sake, and such is the will of my Father.” (Homily of St. John Chrysostom)

In School:

1. If you are assigned to prefect a corridor, the yard, the field, etc., be on time and do not be too easily distracted from your vigilance by the activities going on about you.
2. Check immediately the nature and seriousness of any injury that happens on the school grounds.
3. If you are not appointed to a definite station then walk about so that the students are never sure just when you will appear at any given moment.
4. It would be well for you to learn First Aid—particularly the treatment of such injuries as are common around the school grounds.

Boarding School:

1. As prefect of a boarding school, set up a daily schedule so that you or your assistant will be with or near the boys all the time.

2. Boarders should not be permitted to spend too much time in their rooms. After school hours in the afternoon they should be outside the building recreating.
3. Have some means of entertainment or the like to occupy the time of the boarders after their evening study hall.
4. Demand that the boarders dress neatly all the time and more particularly for chapel, school, study, and meals.
5. Be sure that any extraordinary privileges are sanctioned in writing by the boy's parents. Such privileges might be visiting people other than his parents, smoking, spending the week end at another boy's home, and the like.
6. Make sure there is time on the schedule for the spiritual development of the boarders. Such things as morning and evening prayers, weekly Mass, Confession and Communion, are important.
7. Learn as much as you can about the background and character of each boy and set aside a time for counseling.

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

“Let us then imitate our Lord, and neglect nothing for the sake of our brethren, not even those things that seem most lowly and abject.” (Office of St. La Salle)

General:

1. These activities include clubs, organizations, sodalities, societies, and the like where you have been placed as moderator.
2. Such groups should aim at fostering good school spirit.
3. These activities should enable the student to express his talents and initiative and thus help towards self-development.

Meetings:

1. As moderator you should have a definite goal in mind. Do not hold meetings just for the sake of "killing time."
2. Do not plan meetings at a time that interferes with the schedule of classes. Meetings at night are sometimes permitted but should not be too frequent because they may be used as an excuse by the student for not doing his homework.
3. Calling individual students from classes should not be permitted as it disturbs the teacher's lesson and may force him to instruct these missing students at a later time.
4. Any planned activities that affect the school in general should be approved by the principal's office.

TEACHER'S CHECK-LIST

Classroom Teaching

	Not Observed	Yes	No
1. Are materials at hand, plans for work present, and administration of passing material worked out?			
2. Is your classroom work begun promptly?			
3. Is there a good attitude on the part of the students toward you?			
4. Is there evidence of careful planning?			
5. Are your aims clearly stated?			
6. Is the present classwork tied up with preceding work?			
7. Is illustration material used?			
8. Are good work habits on the part of the students in evidence?			
9. Do the students waste time?			
10. Are practical results in evidence?			
11. Do you begin your lesson on time and end it on time?			
12. Do you present the material to meet the relative intelligence of all?			
13. Do you determine that all have a sufficient grasp of the material presented before going ahead in the lesson?			
14. Is the entire class time fully occupied?			
15. Is all classwork and homework corrected and graded?			
16. Do you explain the lesson sufficiently for all to understand?			
17. Do you have sufficient knowledge of the subject?			
18. Do your lessons show good preparation?			

Classroom Techniques

	Not Observed	Yes	No
1. Do you leave your place at the front of the room too frequently?			
2. Do you, while writing on the blackboard, turn your back to the students?			
3. Are you inclined to be too familiar with the students in speech or manner?			
4. Do you make good use of your eyes by watching the class constantly during the lesson?			
5. Are you inclined to speak too much and too often during the class period?			
6. Do you use your voice effectively in teaching?			
7. Do you permit the students to leave their seats for any reason without permission?			
8. Do you have good control of the classroom situation?			
9. Do you assign homework regularly?			
10. Is your questioning confined to certain students or a particular segment of the class to the neglect of others?			
11. Are the students led along in the lesson by your questioning?			
12. Are you led by the students into discussing irrelevant material?			

Personal Characteristics

	Not Observed	Yes	No
1. Do you have the respect of your students?			
2. Are you animated with an ill-regulated zeal?			
3. Do you act timid and shy before the students?			
4. Do you act in an overbearing manner that causes students to fear or resent you?			
5. Do you conduct yourself with a dignified reserve?			
6. Do you manifest confidence in yourself without losing the virtue of humility?			
7. Are you prudent in punishing?			
8. Are you patient with those students who do not readily understand or with those who are usually inclined to mischief?			
9. Do you display enthusiasm and interest in teaching?			
10. Do you show care in your personal appearance and grooming?			
11. Do you keep an accurate and legible class record ?			
12. Do you take effective care of your own discipline problems?			
13. Are you prompt in arrival at class?			
14. Do you speak and act in a professional manner?			
15. Do you leave your class unattended at any time?			