

“Make ‘em Laugh!”

Some emotional stimuli actually have the ability to work in our favor with regards to problem-solving and information acquisition. One such emotional stimulus is **laughter**.

A Stanford research team found that humor helps the brain regulate dopamine levels responsible for mood, motivation, attention and learning. “The findings indicate that humor can have positive effects not only on mood, but also on motivation and learning” <<http://www.livestrong.com/article/170399-effects-of-laughter-on-the-human-brain/#ixzz22tUyUpz8>>.

What does God’s Word say?

- Psalm 126:2 *Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing: then said they among the heathen, The LORD hath done great things for them.*
- Proverbs 15:13 *A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.*
- Proverbs 17:22 *A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones.*

Practical Applications of Novelty & Humor in the classroom:

If making a fool of myself brings you joy, then I’m okay with that! – S. J. Wolcott

1. Set the Stage
 - a. Decorate the room!
 - b. Decorate your face – wear a smile!
2. Arrival
 - a. Wear a hat or something fun when you greet the children.
 - b. Have a joke ready to tell them when you greet them, preferably one that connects with the lesson in some way:
 - i. What is the best thing to put in homemade bread? Your teeth!
 - ii. What is Popeye’s favorite oil? Olive Oil!
 - c. Personal Mailboxes & GNC Task Force
 - i. Encouragers (1 per 3-5); Prayer; Comedian; Materials Manager...

3. Snack

- a. Remember “social interaction” is the best form of novel stimuli, so have a pair-share or group discussion question ready that connects to the lesson, builds friendships and engages the learners during this time. (use dialogue balloons!)
 - i. If you knew you may never eat again, what would you choose to eat as your last meal?
 - ii. Have you ever won a trophy or ribbon? Share with your group a time when you received a special recognition, trophy or ribbon.

4. To Change Activities

- a. Use a silly sound or fun chant with motions or just give different ways to move – let’s march to the story rug, let’s skip to the back table, hop to, “Dougie” or “Carlton”...

5. Song Time

- a. Keep songs rotated, don’t sing the same songs at the same times every day.
- b. When portions of songs are important or repeated, have the kids shout or whisper these parts to help them remember (“my greatest need, my greatest need is to know Christ”).

6. Word Up!

- a. Do a silly action or have a silly sound to signal the Word Up response
 - i. There are several sites that have raven sound clips and other sound bites you can use (hark.com).

7. Gospel Activities / Gospel Spotlight

- a. These provide great opportunities for novel stimuli– remember to change these up!

8. Lesson times

- a. Use costuming & allow kids to act out portions of lessons.
- b. Use hats to “become” different people as you tell the lesson.
- c. Use voices.
- d. If appropriate, use a joke or funny story as part of your introduction.
- e. Incorporate actions that the kids can do in the lesson:
 - i. Build an altar, knead bread, deliver a letter, read a letter, run in place, pretend to eat.

9. Memory Verse

- a. Change the repetition each week.
- b. Try a joke or funny story to introduce this.
- c. Use silly actions or facial expressions during the repetition time.
 - i. Lesson 3 is “Be still and know that I am God” – have kids do a movement or talk amongst themselves, then ring a bell & have them freeze & repeat the verse.

10. Review Time!

- a. Balloons with questions in them
- b. Disc shooters
- c. Soccer ball with questions
- d. "Last Comic Standing"
 - i. Two persons go head to head with their jokes & the rest vote by show of hands which is the best jokester.
 1. In order to continue to next round, the remaining contender must answer a review question correctly, then go head to head with another volunteer.

11. Closer – Leave 'em laughing!

Now for the "Don'ts"

1. Don't be afraid to make a fool of yourself!
2. Don't be afraid to laugh at yourself!
3. Don't take yourself too seriously!