Classroom Guidance: A Few of My Favorite Things

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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, I devote one day per week (I work 3 days/week) to classroom guidance, enabling me to visit each classroom on a monthly basis. As my caseload for individual and group students is so high (like everyone else’s), this leaves 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 should do this one)
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.
   - How hard did this look? How hard was it?
   - Impairment by drugs/alcohol can make you think something is pretty easy.
   - 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

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**CDS/VIDEOS**

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**CURRICULUM**

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Sesame Workshop is the nonprofit educational organization behind Sesame Street and so much more. Our mission is to help kids grow smarter, stronger, and kinder. We provide FREE tools and resources in categories like health and wellness, early learning, and social-emotional wellbeing. We’re passionate about reaching children and the caring adults in their lives.

**our partnerships:**
Working at the national, regional, and local levels, Sesame fosters relationships with community-based organizations and agencies to integrate these resources into their existing work so that together we can engage more families and young children in a deep connection with these tools. Our projects are funded by support from corporations, foundations, and/or government agencies.

**physical toolkits + printed resources**

- Little Children, Big Challenges: Divorce
- Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration
- Talking is Teaching
- Sesame Street and Autism: See Amazing in All Children
- Let’s Get Ready! Planning Together for Emergencies
- Here for Each Other: Helping Families After Emergencies
- Sesame Street for Military Families - TEC Provider Guide
- Sesame Street for Military Families - TEC Magazine & Poster Set
- Sesame Street for Military Families - TEC Poetry Magnets
- Talk, Listen, Connect: When (Military) Families Grieve
- Sesame Street for Military Families: Transitions

View all toolkits at [www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits](http://www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits)
**Much needed resources for families with young children, ages 2 to 8, as they encounter the tough transitions that come with divorce. Digital resources include a Parent/Caregiver Guide, Children’s Storybook, and tip sheet for extended family and friends. A mobile app for adults, Sesame Street: Divorce, is also available on the App Store, Google Play, and Amazon for Kindle Fire.**

**Printed Materials Available:**

Divorce Toolkit Includes:
- A Sesame Street DVD
- A Guide for Parents and Caregivers
- A children’s Storybook

Little children, Big Challenges: Divorce toolkits available in quantities of 50.

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**A bilingual (English/Spanish) multimedia community engagement initiative to support young children, ages 3 to 8 and their caregivers during the incarceration of a parent. Digital resources include a Parent/Caregiver Guide, Children’s Storybook, and a tip sheet for incarcerated parents.**

**Resources for Adults:**
- Training webinars for providers integrating these resources into their communities

**Printed Materials Available:**

Incarceration Toolkit Includes:
- A Sesame Street DVD
- A Guide for Parents and Caregivers
- A children’s Storybook

Little children, Big Challenges: Incarceration toolkits available in quantities of 50.

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View all toolkits at [www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits](http://www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits)
The bilingual (English/Spanish) multimedia program leverages the power of the beloved Sesame Street friends to motivate parents and caregivers to make the most of everyday opportunities to talk, read, and sing with their children ages 0-3, and inspires and empowers parents and caregivers to promote their children’s literacy development while nurturing their overall growth – from day one. Digital resources include a Family Guide, a Storybook, Milestone Cards, and a Community Guide.

Printed Materials Available:

Talking is Teaching Toolkit Includes:
• A Parent & Caregiver Guide
• A Children’s Read-Aloud Book

Talking is Teaching toolkits available in quantities of 75.

Sesame Street and Autism: See Amazing in All Children is a nationwide initiative aimed at communities with children ages 2 to 5. Developed with input from parents, people who serve the autism community, and people with autism. See Amazing in All Children offers families ways to overcome common challenges and simplify everyday activities. At the same time the project fosters an affirming narrative around autism for all families and kids.

Digital Resources Include:
• Video playlist on YouTube at youtube.com/sesameincommunities
• Videos for download from iTunes and Amazon Instant Video
• A mobile app Sesame Street and Autism available for iPad on the App Store
• Sesame Street and Autism Newsletter for project resources and updates: http://autism.sesamestreet.org/keep-amazing-going/

Printed Materials Available:

We’re Amazing 1, 2, 3! Storybooks available in quantities of 50.
social emotional wellbeing

Let’s Get Ready

Let’s Get Ready: Planning Together for Emergencies is a bilingual (English/Spanish) multiple media resource designed to help entire families, especially those with young children, to plan and prepare together for emergencies. Digital resources include a Family Guide, Educator Guide, Community Guide, and printable tip sheets

Printed Materials Available:

Let’s Get Ready Family Guides are available in quantities of 75.

Here for Each Other

Here for Each Other is a bilingual resource (English/Spanish) that provides tips, ideas, and activities to help adults and children cope with disasters. Even in the most difficult of circumstances, families can find strength and resilience within their community. Digital resources include a Community Guide and seven Family Guides tailored to specific natural disasters including: earthquakes, fires, floods, hurricanes, tornados, winter storms, and other emergencies. A video playlist of Family Comfort Moments can also be found on YouTube at youtube.com/sesameincommunities.

Printed Materials Available:

Here for Each Other Family Guides are available in quantities of 75.

The Electric Company Military Families

The Electric Company Military Families – Provider Guide
Available in quantities of 5.

The Electric Company Military Families Magazine & Poster Sets
Available in quantities of 50.

Sesame Street Magnetic Poetry Sets

View all toolkits at www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits
This initiative provides resources in support of families with young children between the ages of 2 to 8, who are coping with the death of a parent. Digital resources include a Parent/Caregiver Guide, Facilitator’s Guide, Children’s Storybook, and printable children’s activities. Full length videos are also available for download from iTunes.

Printed Materials Available:

Talk, Listen, Connect: When Families Grieve Toolkits include:
- A sesame Street DVD
- A Guide for Parents and Caregivers
- A Children’s Story

Talk, Listen, Connect: When Families Grieve toolkits are available in quantities of 50.

This project is a research-based, multimedia initiative created to provide resources for families transitioning from active duty to civilian life. The project was funded with major support from Bristol-Meyers Squibb Foundation and additional contributions from Prudential. Digital resources include a digital storybook, 10 new videos, and exciting e-newsletter campaign, partner toolkits, and more.

Printed Materials Available:

My Story, My Big Adventure Activity Book: A printed kids’ keepsake book with interactive pages to help parents and kids talk together about the transition in positive ways.

My Story, My Big Adventure activity books are available in quantities of 75.

View all toolkits at www.sesamestreet.org/toolkits