

# BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT CHEAT SHEET FOR PARISH CATECHISTS

*It is a task of catechesis to make people more aware of their most basic experiences, to help them to judge in the light of the Gospel the questions and needs that spring from them, as well as to educate them in a new way of life. Thus, the person becomes capable of behaving in a responsible and active way before the gift of God.*

General Directory for Catechesis, no. 152

## SET EXPECTATIONS

- Be prepared at the start of every class: have your materials, classroom, and lesson plan ready.
- Develop a list of classroom expectations framed as positive statements (e.g., “We respect one another” instead of “We don’t hit each other”). Older students may be able to help develop a list for their class.
- Post the list in the learning environment.
- Remind students of their expectations at the start of each class.
- Establish a signal for silence (e.g., hand raised).

## CREATE A HOSPITABLE ENVIRONMENT

- Try to match the physical environment to the activity, including setting up a prayer table.
- Match the physical environment to student needs.
- Encourage students to take care of bodily needs before class.
- Keep a consistent routine, starting with prayer.
- Establish a seating arrangement.
- Keep distractions out of sight.
- Use student names.

## KEEP STUDENTS ENGAGED

- Have a “pre-class” activity ready as students arrive (coloring pages, short reading quiz, crossword puzzle, etc.).
- Use a variety of learning techniques – don’t just lecture or read out of the book.
- Don’t stay in one place; move around the environment.
- Be especially careful when transitioning from one activity to the next.
- Have a short activity ready in case your lesson plan runs short.

## ENFORCE EXPECTATIONS

- Give immediate feedback.
- Focus on the behavior, not the person.
- Have a parish procedure in place for students who consistently and intentionally disrupt the class.
- Communicate expectations and topics covered in class with parents/guardians.
- Discuss ongoing problems with parents/guardians.

## USE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

- Remember that good behavior is learned.
- Praise good efforts.
- Plan a fun activity for the end of class.
- Consider an incentive system for long-term good behavior.

## THINGS TO AVOID

- Never use prayer as a punishment.
- Never enlist God as an “enforcer.”
- Never send a child out of the classroom unsupervised.
- Never use corporal punishment.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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