

Middle and High School Classroom Management Part 1

Hi, thanks again for being a Junior Achievement volunteer and welcome to Middle and High School Classroom Management. We know you probably have several questions about your upcoming experience so we hope to answer those questions in this short video. We'll talk about the various behaviors you may encounter in the classroom during your JA experience and then explore techniques and tips you can use with students in your JA sessions. Every class is different, but remember, the teacher will be there to assist you. Let's get started!

Connecting with Students

It's important to make connections by introducing yourself and sharing applicable professional examples throughout each JA session. As the students begin to learn more about who you are, it's a good idea to recognize the students' interests as well. Try taking notice of signs and posters in the hallway on the way to your classroom. This will allow you to comment on a successful sports team or academic club and it shows students you are also interested in their activities. Once you've established rapport you can encourage students to share something about themselves - their name, their favorite subject in school, or their future career aspirations.

Sometimes students will ask you questions or share stories that may seem too personal or that do not relate to the JA program content. Students may ask you if you're married or dating, if you have any children, and even how much money you make.

So how do you handle these types of questions?

Try to redirect the conversation back to the topic in the day's learning goals. If a student asks an off-topic question or begins to share a story during your introduction, allow the student to talk for a few seconds, and thank him or her for sharing. Not all questions need an answer. So you should feel comfortable moving forward with your introduction.

In this example, right after introducing yourself and establishing the learning goals, a student asks you how much money you make? You may give a salary range for your job, or if you are uncomfortable with sharing that information, you can use this example as another way to respond:

“That’s a great question! The amount of money you make can depend on your education and experience. If we have time, we can talk more about this at the end of the class. Let’s see what else there is to learn about.”

Keeping Students Engaged

When visiting a younger, elementary classroom it's common to find that students are excited and eager to meet you and have you in their class. They may repeatedly raise their hand to answer questions. While this may be true with Middle and High School students, you may also experience the exact opposite of having overactive, eager student participation. Some students may become distracted or disengaged during a JA session. If you notice this occurring in your JA classroom, try these techniques:

As you're presenting, walk around and try to make eye contact. Keep moving throughout the room. Your proximity alone is a powerful motivator that can get students engaged. If a group appears distracted or off task, move closer to them with an encouraging motive, and just stand by to see what they do next.

Get to know students by learning each of their names. Addressing students by their name builds rapport and lets them know you value their participation. Not only is it a good way to involve students who may seem disinterested but it also lets students see that you will attempt to interact with them throughout the sessions.

Oftentimes while teaching, you can engage students by turning statements into questions. Think about selecting students who do not appear to be interested. For example, when discussing budgeting, instead of telling them the value of budgets, ask: "Jennifer, what happens when people don't budget?" Build on the response by engaging others so that the discussion becomes a problem-solving opportunity.

At this age, students may have demanding extracurricular responsibilities or personal, private issues going on. Consult your classroom teacher if you need assistance or advice with engaging a particular student.

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