

TRANSFORMING

CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Is it possible to teach students about service using a classroom management system?

Justin Fraser, a Year Five teacher at Northpine Christian College, wants his students to understand that there is more to life than material gain. Using a class management system, he adapts the program and adds a twist to help his students recognise the value of service.

“As a teacher of Year 5 students, I want my kids to realise the value of serving others. Our Classroom Behaviour Management system involves the students earning BEANs for Behaviour, Effort Achievement and Neatness.

To reflect real life as much as possible, students make choices as to how to spend their BEANs. Some choose to buy various products from the BEAN shop (including desk title deeds, water tanks, solar panels, market places and farms) which can help them earn more beans if managed wisely. Others choose to spend their BEANs in different ways.

In order to help students develop a respect for nature and a desire to care for their environment, students are given the opportunity to buy nature reserves. This enables them to learn about protecting endangered animals.

Alternatively, students may choose to donate as many BEANs as they like to the classroom service jar. Students are made aware that any BEANs which are donated to the classroom service jar are converted to real money which is then donated to various projects throughout the year.

Past service projects have included purchasing school supplies for a school in Cambodia, donating to various natural disaster appeals, contributing to Operation Christmas Child and various Adventist Development and Relief Agency projects.

About one week before school ends for the year, I explain to the students that we have reached the cut-off date for donations to service. At the end of classes on the last day we discuss

how the BEANs, which have had so much ‘value’ throughout the year, are now worthless. We discuss what it has been like to put all your energy into earning, spending and attaining more ‘possessions’ which will eventually mean nothing.

We contrast the experience of those students who chose to pursue selfish gains with the experience of those who chose to give to others through the Service Jar. When we reach the end of our life on earth our possessions will mean nothing. Only what we’ve done to build others up, serve them, and inspire authentic relationships with God will truly matter.

Matthew 6:19–21 “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” **TEACH**

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Justin Fraser and students, with the Service Jar

[Photograph: Tina Swanson]