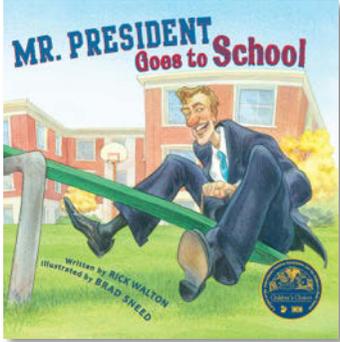


TEACHER'S GUIDE



Mr. President Goes to School

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Ages 4–8 | Informational

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Everyone has bad days – even the president. So when his day starts off badly, Mr. President decides he is in need of a time out from running the country. Disguising himself, he sneaks out of the White House, hurries down the street to the local school, and enrolls in Mrs. Appletree’s class.

There Mr. President slides his fingers through globs of finger paint. He spins himself silly on the merry-go-round at recess. He practices saying “please,” raising his hand, and taking turns. And he doesn’t miss a single beat when everyone does the hokey-pokey.

But when he returns to the White House, he is greeted by a panicked secretary of state and two angry world leaders on the brink of war. Fortunately, Mr. President recalls what he learned in Mrs. Appletree’s class, and he comes up with just the right approach to avoid an international crisis.

OBJECTIVE

Classroom management is the number one priority when setting the tone for a new year. Taking a few days or a couple of weeks to teach your students the proper way to act in class is invaluable for the rest of the school year. Teachers know that all students benefit when the classroom is orderly and the students cooperate and are respectful of each other and the very best window of time to teach classroom behavior and expectations is within the first two weeks of school. Please use this guide to help you teach your students about how manners, cooperation, and etiquette are essential to having a successful school year.

CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: CIRCLE TIME

- This activity gives students a chance to share their ideas and stories and make the environment feel safe and a place where they can learn from each other. At the heart of the Circle Time Model is a class meeting, which involves the whole class sitting in a circle to look at issues relating to personal, social, moral and health education. The circle meetings aim to encourage the development of positive relationships, self-discipline, conflict resolution, assertive communication and democratic group processes alongside the skills of speaking, listening, observing, thinking, and concentrating.
- Sit in a chair or on the floor with students (pillows optional) in a circle so that everyone is involved and facing each other. You may want to use an object (stuffed toy or small rubber ball or other classroom object) that is passed around the circle with only the person holding the object allowed to talk. Start off by saying something positive about each student or a few students and then goes into some issues that need to be addressed and remind the class as a whole about what is expected. Circle Time then is opened to the group to give suggestions on how to solve issues. Once everyone is on the same page as far as classroom expectations, students can share positive observations or issues they have and open the topic to group discussion.
- Start doing Circle Time once a day during the first

two weeks of school and then move to once a week or as needed basis. Remember to follow through with suggestions and actions that are suggested during this time to make it as effective as possible. Note: This exercise is effective if issues/problems are generalized when addressing the group and only positive examples involving specific students are highlighted.

Circle Time: follows a clear structure around half an hour that can be modified to fit the needs of the classroom.

Opening remarks or game: pulls the group together, provides a sense of fun and enjoyment, used to teach learning skills, moral values and codes of conduct.

Round Table: gives everybody a chance to speak. A speaking object (a small toy) enables a focus on the speaker and indicates that all others must listen. It is this section of Circle Time where scripted sentences are often used. Examples might include: I find it easiest to work in class when... I get fed up when... I was pleased with myself when...

Open Forum: an open, free discussion phase which can be used to discuss and solve problems and set targets

Celebration of successes: a chance for students to thank others, both children and adults, for acts of kindness etc., during the past week

Closing game or remarks: brings a sense of closure and bridges into the next part of the school day. The structure is designed to build a sense of class community. The teacher acts as a non-authoritarian facilitator, encouraging co-operation and creating a climate of emotional safety.

Problem solving: Circle Time can be used to help solve problems that have been identified by either the teacher or students. Issues and

problems can be identified by brainstorming or by rounds such as, “The best thing about this school is...” and “The worst thing about this school is...” Then the idea is to make sure that if a real problem is identified at least one positive suggestion is agreed on before the session ends.

ACTIVITY 2: WE'RE ALL FRIENDS

- This activity shows students how they are more alike than different. Help them understand that the few differences they have can only make life's experiences more interesting and how we learn from each other.
- Using an 11x17 piece of white paper, have students create a poster all about them. Place a picture of the student (one sent in from home or taken at school) in the center of the sheet and have students fill in five to eight of the following pieces of information about themselves around their picture:
 - Number of family members
 - Age
 - Favorite hobby/sport
 - Favorite color
 - How they get to school (mode of transportation)
 - Favorite food/snack
 - Favorite place to read
 - What they want to be when they grow up
 - Favorite subject/topic
 - Favorite animal
- From responses, allow students to pick one of their choices to illustrate in a group. Give each group a large piece of butcher paper and draw or write the “something” that they have in common with the others in that group. Allow the group to share their group posters. You may also want to graph the students' responses to show them how their answers vary (emphasizing similarities, but briefly pointing out differences, too). Help students to realize that it is fine to be different and that their uniqueness is what makes them special.

CIRCLE TIME

- Is a democratic and creative approach used to consider a wide range of issues affecting the classroom.
- Promotes self-discipline and self-esteem.
- Helps students learn and understand the consequences of their behavior and begin to take on responsibility for themselves and their classmates.
- Gradually shifts responsibility for discipline from the teacher to the students themselves.

ACTIVITY 3: POLITE PEOPLE SAY PLEASE (AND THANK YOU)

- Have the students demonstrate ways to be polite and discuss why it is important to share and show gratitude when working alone and with others. Manners count.
- Look through *Mr. President Goes to School* after reading it once and have students point out times when the characters were showing the correct way to act. Correct Behavior Examples:
 - Secretary of State talking with the President

President and students raising their hands when talking to the teacher

Mr. President talking with the Prime Ministers

- Next, look through and point some instances the incorrect way to behave was shown and have them identify what was wrong and what could have been done instead to be polite? Why? Incorrect Behavior Examples:
 - Two students fighting to be king
 - Two prime ministers name calling
- Have students discuss why behaving in a way that is respectful to them and others is ideal. Really spell out for them how they feel when they act the right way and the wrong way. Ask them why they think they feel good and bad, and have them explain what that means.
- Read two well-known Shel Silverstein poems: *I'm Making a List*, and *One Two* for humor. Also read *Lady Lupin's Book of Etiquette* (see box at right). Allow students to point out the humor in each of these works. Also consider real life vs. make-believe and which examples are only used to create humor and why these authors may have made fun references to being impolite.

ONE TWO*

By Shel Silverstein

One two, buckle my shoe.

"Buckle your *own* shoe!"

Who said that?

"I did. What are you doing with those silly buckles on your shoes anyway?"

Three four, shut the door.

"You shut it—you *opened* it."

Er... five six, pick up sticks.

"Why should I pick them up—do you think I'm your slave? Buckle my shoe, shut the door, pick up sticks, next thing you'll be telling me to lay them straight."
But it's only a poem... Nine ten, a big fat... oh never mind.

*Taken from the book *A Light in the Attic* by Shel Silverstein

I'M MAKING A LIST*

By Shel Silverstein

I'm making a list of the things I must say for politeness,

And goodness and kindness and gentleness, sweetness and rightness:

Hello

Pardon me

How are you

Excuse me

Bless you

May I?

Thank you

Goodbye

If you know some that I forgot,

Please stick them into your eye!

*Taken from the book *Where the Sidewalk Ends: Poems and Drawings* by Shel Silverstein

ACTIVITY 4: THAT'S WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT!

- Have students think about how lonely or boring life would be if everyone looked the same or had the same personality. Would they ever learn anything new or have any new experiences without the contrast of others? Help students appreciate themselves and the people around them by realizing that we are all the same in many ways. We may look and act different but we all want to be respected, supported, and accepted for being ourselves and loved.
- Ask students to orally tell or write a description about what they think life would be like if everything/everyone was the same. Help younger groups to create a chart and suggest descriptive words. Have students conclude that differences are necessary to make life interesting. Would you be able to figure out what you really like if you always had the same thing? Would you know what you would want if everything was always the same?
- And last...do the Hokey Pokey!

The Hokey Pokey

You put your right hand in,
You put your right hand out,
You put your right hand in,
And you shake it all about,
You do the hokey pokey
and you turn yourself around
That what it's all about.

Additional verses:

2) left hand

3) right foot

4) left foot

5) head

6) bottom

7) whole self

REVIEWS

“The art, which looks a bit like that of Patricia Polacco, scoops all the inherent silliness out of the story but has a tender side too.” —*Booklist*

“...an adorable book that readers of all ages will fall in love with.” —*OC Family Magazine*

“Sneed's attention to detail makes the book fun to look at over again and again. Overall, a fun introduction to the great things that can be learned in school.” □ *School Library Journal*

“...a prime example of what great picture books are all about...” —*Picture Book Depot*

“...Humorous, exaggerated sketches paint a happy tale that emphasizes the importance of play and silliness, even among important adults. Preschoolers and younger elementary students will enjoy seeing an esteemed man being human and childlike...” —*The Voice-Tribune*

“...Kids will get a kick and a chuckle out of this tall tale about the president.” —*Hickory Ridge Reader*

“In this hilarious look at problem solving, Mr. President (of the United States) dons a Groucho Marx disguise and sneaks away to a place where life seemed a whole lot simpler... This wise, funny tale, with its warm-toned pictures, deals humorously with school issues such as working through conflict and taking turns. It is sure to spark spirited discussion, laughs and exuberant rounds of hokey pokey in classrooms across the country.”
—*Washington Parent*

AWARDS

- Children's Choices —International Reading Association/Children's Book Council
- Washington Children's Choice Picture Book Award (nominee) —Washington Library Media Association
- Alabama Camellia Awards (nominee, grades K–1) —Alabama Department of Education
- Kansas State Reading Circle Recommended Reading List (starred, primary) —Kansas National Education Association
- Charlotte Award Suggested Reading List (primary) —New York State Reading Association
- Utah Book Award (finalist, children's division) —Utah Center for the Book

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rick Walton has worked as a cook in a Mexican restaurant, a secretary, a missionary, an arts administrator, a teacher, and a computer software writer and designer. But now he has the best job of all—writing for children. He has published over sixty books for children including riddle books, picture books, poetry, activity books, mini-mysteries, and magazine articles. Rick and his wife Ann live in Provo, Utah with their five children in a hodge-podge house on a secluded lot with a thousand trees, in the shadow of the Rocky Mountains.

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ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Brad Sneed has illustrated over 20 books including our bestselling title *The Boy Who Was Raised by Librarians*. He was born and raised in Kansas where he now lives with his wife and daughter.

www.bradneed.com

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Peachtree Teacher's Guide for **MR. PRESIDENT GOES TO SCHOOL**

prepared by Kenyette Kilpatrick

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