

## **Classroom Dynamics**

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I have never spent this much time mediating between 8-year-old girls! At least once a week there is a scuffle between two or more of them and at times even involving girls from another classroom! Many times it appears to be a simple misunderstanding but just when I feel I have figured out how to end the endless circle of hurt feelings, someone tells me, *Belle\* is involved too!* and then follows the insistence that things cannot be resolved until someone else joins the discussion. It always appears to be the same girls going in different circles around each other. At times all but two of my girls are in the hall trying to reconcile their differences.

I am fortunate, however, that my girls have been taught good problem solving skills. Many times all I have to do is shush all but one of them, so they each get a chance to say their piece. Usually, they figure things out pretty much on their own, with very little guidance from me.

I was recently asked how I deal with my own conflicts. I had a really hard time answering that question because I have so few of them. I am not set in my ways and am not a natural leader, so I generally go with the flow and try to keep the stubborn ones appeased. I have a difficult time understanding why everything is such a big deal to them, and why they have to argue about petty little things. I have a student with a similar attitude. She won't cause a ruckus when she is left out, or even when she is bothered by others. At times others spoke up for her when they witnessed injustices.

Interesting how boys are never in the hall discussing misunderstandings. All I have to do when they come to me with a problem (if they even come to me!) is listen to both sides, have them tell me what needs to happen, and when they do it, it is over and done with, in seconds.

There always appears to be one or two students in a classroom who will have difficulty getting along with anyone! On some days they will get along really well with someone and just when you think all your worship talks and personal planning strategies have done nothing, someone will write about how they like that person for whatever reason in their journal and make the whole day worth while.

Motivation levels vary. I have students who ask what our next topic will be in math or science and then begin reading up on it! Others....well, let's just say it's often a painful process for both of us.

It never ceases to amaze me why God made our different personalities. However, it is easy to understand how boring and difficult it would be if too many individuals were alike. I praise God daily for the dynamics of my classroom. Not only do I teach them about acceptance and diversity, I am learning as well.

\* Real names not used.