

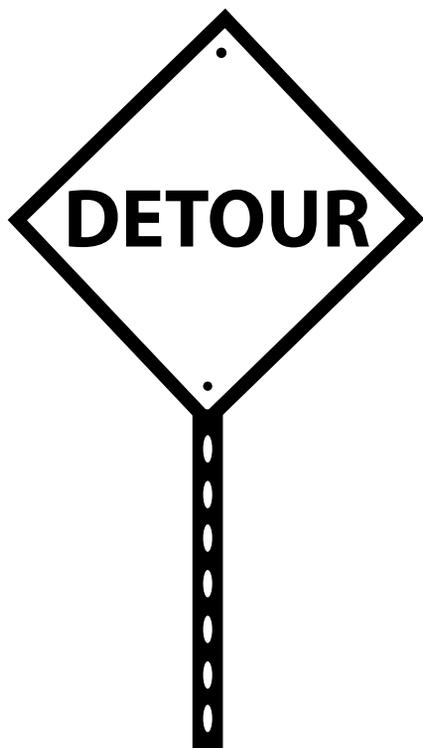


# Distractions



“Blessed is the man who perseveres under trial, because when he has stood the test, he will receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love him” (James 1:12).

- How can you learn to persevere through difficult moments in your classroom?
- How do you keep focused on the main goal despite distractions?



## ▼ Training Session

Working with kids and their seemingly endless amounts of energy can be the greatest blessing...*and* the greatest challenge. With children's energy comes a number of distractions: blurting out questions, cracking jokes, commenting on the snow falling outside as they stare out the window.

It can be hard to stay focused on what you've set out to do—to help children grow closer to Jesus.

And you don't want to squelch their energy—just channel it.

So *match* their energy. Be energetic from the moment *before* the kids walk in the room. Exude interest in your lesson. Engage kids. You'll capture their attention—and their minds will be less tempted to wander.

Also keep in mind that a lot's happened since you last saw your kids. So allow for sharing time early in the session. If they tell their stories then, they won't need to when it's your turn. Ask questions about the week. If you have a small class, give each child a minute to tell a story to everyone. With a large class, have kids pair up to share.

Kids don't only have things to *tell* you. They also like to ask questions—sometimes right on track, many times not.

Value their questions. Your classroom is a good place to share the questions and thoughts in their hearts.

Quickly decide if the question is one to integrate into your lesson or not. If not, it's OK to say, “I love your question. Why don't we finish up here, then while we're working on our craft project, you and I can talk?” This gives value to the question but redirects the focus back to the point.

Your kids are also creative. And they love to share their creativity. Give them that opportunity at appropriate times. For example, you may have a student with a great sense of humor. He loves to crack jokes. But sometimes the jokes come at the wrong moment, distracting from your lesson.

Talk with that student one-on-one: “I want you to know I think you're very funny! I love your sense of humor, but there's a good time and a bad time for being funny. Watch me. If I'm being serious, you should be serious. If I'm more relaxed, that would be a great time for a joke.”

Encourage personality growth. Provide an avenue.

Distractions are natural with kids. Give them space to tell stories and ask questions.

And give them grace to be themselves.

Take a deep breath and know that you're playing a significant role in their lives. It won't always be perfect.

And that's OK.



## Take this training deeper as you think over these questions:

- Think of a recent situation in your own classroom. How can you help manage a specific child's distractions?
- Does your class time allow for your kids' creativity to be expressed?
- What would change if you were to rearrange your classroom schedule to accommodate time for questions and storytelling?

### ▼ Journal

*Lord, help me see all the children in my class for all you've made them to be, and when they distract from what I'm trying to do...*

God has trusted you with his children. The time you spend with them leaves an eternal mark. It may feel frustrating at times. But look at the big picture. You're doing kingdom work. *That* will leave an imprint on the hearts and minds of the children you serve!

### ▼ Application

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Choose a day this week you'll count distractions. Just make note of each time you're distracted—when your attention is diverted from what you're focused on—during that day. After you do that, answer the questions below.

- How many times were you distracted?
- How did it feel?
- Were the distractions worth your being distracted? Why or why not?
- Were they important to someone else?
- How can you take what you learned from this experience and apply it to your class?