



Time Well Spent

“I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints” (Philemon 1:4–5).

- How can praying for and spending time with students build a firmer foundation for their lives?
- How can we inspire faith in students by forming relationships with them?

▼ Training Session

Think about your closest friends. How did you become close? Probably not by simply spending a short time together, making your friends call you by your last name.

Most friendships are developed through quality time spent together. Lots of quality time!

Over cups of coffee on rainy days. Getting together for dessert and games on weekends. Discussing the Big Life Questions together.

Your kids deserve the same.

You probably can't spend the same amount of time with each child in your class as you do with your closest friends, but you can find *some* time to get to know kids personally—and to let them get to know you.

Remember: It's OK to interrupt a lesson to spend time on relationships. Try these ideas:

- **Spend one-on-one time in class.** If class size and volunteer numbers permit, take a few minutes out of each lesson to spend time with each child. Ask questions. Really listen to the answers. Find out what life is like for each student.
- **Stop to play.** Children love to play. They love to imagine. So do that. Bring in a game. Write a story together. Fire up your imagination!
- **Work with them.** We teachers often direct kids to do a project and then coach them through it. Instead, do the project *with* them. When kids are working in groups, join a group and take part. If kids are working alone, do the same project alone as well.

Don't limit your time spent with kids to just time in the classroom, though. There are numerous things you can do with kids outside of class—safely:

- **Attend their events.** Learn what kinds of sports and extracurricular activities your students are involved in. Then make it a point to attend one for each child.
- **Have a party at your house.** Invite your whole class over. You can make the food, or have kids bring something.
- **Spend one-on-one time outside of class.** Kids love one-on-one attention. Be careful, though. Know your church's policy for safety. Consult parents to ask for written permission. Hang out with students in public places. You may even want to make this a two-on-one time so you have witnesses.

The more children experience healthy relationships at church, the more likely they are to have a healthy relationship with Jesus.





Take this training deeper as you think over these questions:

- In number of minutes, how much time do you intentionally spend getting to know children in your class?
- Would your students say the same?
- How can you safely spend time with kids outside of class?

▼ Journal

I can better connect to students by...

God has blessed you with a role in the lives of several children in your church. It's an exciting thing and the more you embrace the idea of truly knowing and caring for your students, the more you will be a Christ-like presence and example in their lives. It's a high calling, one that you are investing eternal treasure in.

▼ Application

With your students in mind, consider what it means to be a shepherd and friend in their lives. Plan something fun and unexpected to show them you thought about them during the week. For example, bring a special treat, make them each a special card, pay a house visit this week. Tell them how much you enjoy spending time with them each week.