

# Methods for Teaching Middle School Students (Grades 6-8)

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- A. How Middle School students (Grades 6-8) learn. Change is the definitive word for middle school students. They are characterized by:
1. Dealing with change in school buildings, routines, and friends.
  2. A profound emphasis on peer relationships.
  3. Physical changes (both visible and internal).
  4. A gradual shift from concrete to abstract thinking.
  5. The ability to reflect on one's own thoughts and actions.
- B. What works and what does not work for middle School students..
1. Do's for Middle School Classes:
    - a. Do allow for plenty of group interaction time (with partners, small groups, or with the whole group).
    - b. Do create an atmosphere where every student is valued and included, encouraged, acceptance by all.
    - c. Do set up opportunities for team or group activities.
    - d. Do encourage the exchange of ideas and much discussion-find out what they're thinking.
    - e. Do post challenge questions that expand the student's thinking.
    - f. Do help the students understand the symbolism and truths represented in proverbs, the parables, etc.
    - g. Do encourage students to choose to make a plan to apply what they learned during the week.
  2. Don'ts for Middle School Classes:
    - a. Don't have students work only independently
    - b. Don't allow students to sit in cliques with the same peers.
    - c. Don't embarrass students for any reason.
    - d. Don't do all the talking and expect students to listen.
    - e. Don't have the students do the same thing the whole time.
    - f. Don't give students all the answers. Lead them to find them.
    - g. Don't expect every middle school student to fully understand figurative language.
    - h. Don't dictate to students how to use what they have learned.
- C. Specific Suggestions:
1. Emphasize stories with heroes of good qualities, but do not hesitate to point out the qualities that are not so good.
  2. Be sure to explain difficult words and customs.
  3. Memorize Bible verses.
  4. Study background materials.

5. Maps can be helpful.
6. Stress the Bible as the inspired Word of God.
7. Bible aids (Bible dictionaries, concordances, etc.) can be used.
8. Book reports can be made on Bible stories.
9. Be sure to relate Bible verses and lessons to problems of children. Judge current events and community news in the light of Bible principles.
10. Raise questions and require that answers be given by reference to verses.
11. Class projects can be a means of learning and growing.