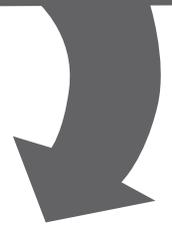


Adapting to the Unexpected



“Many are the plans in a man’s heart, but it is the Lord’s purpose that prevails” (Proverbs 19:21).

- What will help you make plans that are pleasing to God?
- What do you think is God’s overall purpose for your ministry?

▼ Training Session

If there’s one thing you can count on when teaching kids, it’s that you can’t count on things going as planned.

We’ve all been there. You stayed up the night before class, carefully cutting out the foil patterns you’d need to make the angel craft the next morning. You even thought ahead and cut a few extras in case you had visitors. Pretty smart, right?

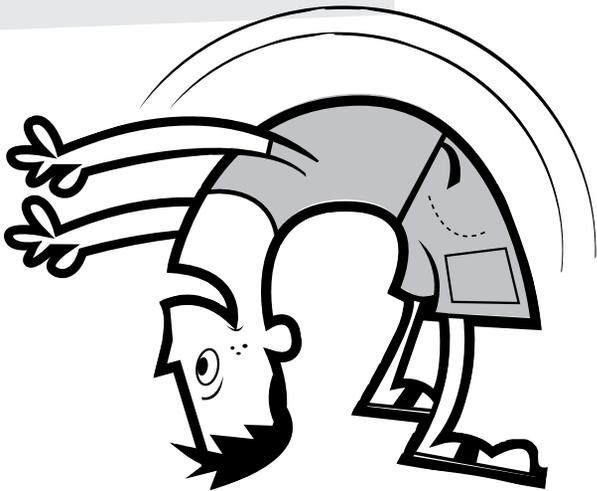
Right! But who knew that so many families would have so many out-of-town guests who would have *so many* kids? And all those extra kids somehow ended up in your class! No way do you have enough foil patterns to make that many angels! What do you do? Scrap the craft? That works, but then what do you replace it with?

Sound familiar? The solution is all about adapting. And all about not having to be perfect.

Things won’t always go as planned. It’s just a fact of life. So when the unexpected happens, don’t beat yourself up about it. Just move on and do your best.

By the way, here are two alternatives for your foil shortage:

- You could have kids form pairs or even trios, and each group could make an angel. Then instead of each child taking an angel craft home, you could have groups display their angels in the hallway or foyer.
- Or you could quickly cut more patterns from construction or copier paper, so kids can make a variety of angels.



The key is to not panic or get caught up in blaming yourself. Instead, move ahead.

If you have more kids in class than you expected, have kids form groups during activities. Scout around and see if any classrooms have an extra volunteer to spare. Or explain the situation to your students and ask for their suggestions. Involving kids in the discussion empowers them and often results in great solutions.

The same holds true if you have too *few* kids show up. Explain the game or activity to your kids, and let them think of creative solutions. Kids may opt to play numerous roles in a play, or they may play a game as a large group rather than in teams.

Trust yourself and trust your kids. Together, you can adapt to any situation!



Take this training deeper as you think over these questions:

- How flexible are you in your teaching?
- What kinds of situations bring you to a halt in the classroom?
- How can you more easily adapt to unexpected situations as you teach?

▼ Journal

Help me to remember that I don't have to be perfect and that you'll help me in every situation. I especially need help when...

As you think about your teaching ministry, focus on your relationships. Trust your relationship with God. Foster your relationship with your students. Then when the unexpected happens, you'll have a firm rock to stand on as you survey the situation and implement your solutions.

▼ Application

Write a "Worst Case Scenario" sketch as you think of what could happen if way too many kids come to your next class. You might write, "I'll panic when I see that many kids. And then they'll all start making noise and running around. And then everyone in the building will know I've lost control. And then someone will discover the snack. And then..." Go ahead—put down your worst fears. Then do the same exercise as you think about having too few kids in class.

Then read over what you wrote. First, you'll see that most of what you fear is unrealistic. Most of what you wrote will never happen (and definitely not all at once). Second, you'll be able to constructively think of ways to solve the situations that may actually occur—in advance!