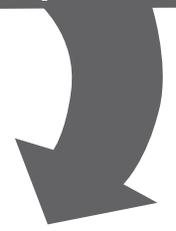




# 'Sasperated



“Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray” (Matthew 14:22–23a).

- After a busy, stress-filled day, why do you think Jesus went off to pray?
- What do you do to ease your own stress that seems to work the best?

## ▼ Training Session

Three-year-old Christopher had a teacher who persistently exhibited extraordinary buoyancy and fortitude. This was remarkable because, let's face it, preschoolers can be tough on even the longest-tenured teacher.

Little Christopher was no exception.

One day after Christopher did a wonderful job of being tough for his teacher, he came home and reported to his mother, “Miss Becki was ‘sasperated today!”

This wise teacher, rather than hiding her own frustration, actually shared with Christopher that she was *exasperated*. How did this wise teacher keep her down days out of the classroom?

She accurately measured her own emotional vulnerability for that particular day and shared it up front.

Having a bad day? That's OK. Everyone does every now and then, but your kids don't need to experience it, too. It's unfair for us to take our emotions out on children when we're experiencing something they aren't really the root of.

Miss Becki realized she was a little stressed-out, so she shared her feelings with her students. This type of self-disclosure goes a long way to creating an atmosphere of honesty and integrity.

But that's merely one way you can spare kids from your 'sasperation. Here are some others for you to consider:

- **Breathe.** Try this simple breathing exercise. Inhale for five seconds. Hold your breath for five seconds. (Count in your head—you're holding your breath.) Then exhale for ten seconds. Do this three or four times, and you'll find yourself clearly calmed and quietly centered.
- **Take some time for yourself.** Get your mind off what's bugging you. Take a long shower or bath. Curl up with a good book on the patio or in front of a cozy fire.
- **Pray.** Prayer is a great peace-producer! Give your situation to God. He asked us to (see Matthew 11:28).

Jesus went off to pray when he was having a bad day. Find what works for you to mentally, emotionally, and spiritually prepare to be an effective teacher no matter what kind of day you're having.





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

- When have you let your emotions take over in front of children? What happened?
- What can you do to keep your down days backstage?
- How would you confront a teaching partner who's having a bad day?

### ▼ Journal

*Prayer was Christ's way of dealing with a stress-filled day.  
List the types of things Jesus would have asked God about after his long day of feeding the 5,000.*

*How are these insights or prayer topics relevant to your own in-class or out-of-classroom stresses?*

**Prayer is God's way of taking our burdens off our hearts and into his arms. Stress ultimately has a spiritual solution! You can unload now!**

### ▼ Application

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Laughing, exercising, reading, reflecting, and singing are ways our bodies recharge and remove stress! Choose one activity this week that would provide one of these stress-eliminators. Here are some choices, or you can make up your own:

- Ride a bike.
- Take a walk with a friend (or pet).
- Read a novel.
- Sing in the shower.
- Take a long bath.
- Watch your favorite comedy on TV.