

# Lasallian Professional Development

Monthly PD for the New Zealand Lasallian Family of schools - WE ARE ONE LASALLE!  
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## this issue

21st Century Strategies to help you grasp the idea of HUMILITY and how this applies today in your own classes.

## The origins of the 12 Virtues...

In 1785, just before the French Revolution, Brother Agathon, who was the fifth Superior General of the De La Salle Brothers, wrote a document called 'The Twelve Virtues of a Good Teacher'. The list of virtues is like sage advice that a teacher might receive from an experienced Year Level Dean or similar.

The 12 Virtues combines two important pieces of work of St. John Baptist De La Salle's. The spiritual vision of his Meditations and the practical pedagogy of his Conduct of Christian Schools.

The 12 Virtues help answer the fundamental question for teachers in Lasallian schools: *"If I am to touch the hearts of my students and teach them in the best possible way, what practices should I follow and what vision should I have for them?"*

Br Agathon reminds the teacher - if you have a problem in your class, look to your own behaviour first.

12 Virtues and 12 months of 2013. Each month, I aim to provide you with useful, modern strategies, that will allow you to bring De La Salle's ideas right into your own classrooms. I kindly acknowledge Br. Jeffery Calligan for his work on this material and real insight. Enjoy learning about humility!

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## The 12 Virtues of a Good Teacher - HUMILITY

### Humility

We are human. We make mistakes. We therefore never abuse our powers and instead make pupils feel respected.

Do you have the HUMILITY that Ashley shows below?

### Humility



Ashley takes Christ as his model in his **relationship** with his students. He believes that Jesus is **alive in his heart** and in those of his students. This gives life and purpose to his teaching as he prepares them to be **good people** in whatever vocation they follow.

# HUMILITY

A virtue that inspires us with a realistic view of ourselves;  
it attributes to us our just due.



## Strategy 29-5: Respecting Our Own Stage

**Purpose:** To avoid frustrations and disillusionment that may come from unrealistic expectations.

**Description:** Reminding ourselves that teachers go through states of development and it is unwise to expect more of ourselves than is now appropriate.

Are you an experienced teacher? If so, strategies will probably help you improve quickly. Are you a beginning teacher? If so, strategies should help you move through the three stages most teachers experience.

*Stage 1: Pleasing others.* Beginners often start with a mind that is set on mastering job requirements, getting accepted, and especially, pleasing those in authority. They want students to like them. They want parents to like them. And they want whoever is in authority to like them, at least enough to offer them a permanent job. Some teachers call this the "survival" stage.

*Stage 2: Teaching the subject matter.* After some experience, particularly after receiving tenure, teachers typically enter a stage when what is most important to them is getting students to learn the subject matter they were hired to teach. Such teachers are willing to confront students, to push them to work hard, even to confront parents: "I believe your son would do better if he did not watch so much TV." Teachers at this stage often feel it is important to cover the subject matter. Pleasing others has reduced priority.

*Stage 3: Teaching beyond the subject matter.* After some time at Stage 2, many teachers notice that no matter what they do, some students never learn much subject matter and many of those who do promptly forget it, often within days of exams. Furthermore, the teachers may come to see that students who do not forget what they learned hardly ever use it. How often, after all, are adults asked to find the area of a parallelogram or name the battles of the Civil War? This realization leads teachers to reevaluate the importance of subject matter. Typically, then, they become less obsessive about covering subject matter, more willing to allot class time to other matters, for example, to events that excite or worry students. Such teachers typically open their concerns beyond subject matter to show respect for good living as well as good learning.



If you are a beginner, you will almost certainly start at Stage 1. Guard against expecting so much from yourself that you invite disillusionment. Similarly, if you have recently moved into State 2, you may find it wise to allow yourself to remain where you are as long as you need to be there. In short, respect your own time clock. Know that strategies will help you move through your teaching stages smoothly. And if you are one of the few beginners willing to risk starting with a Stage 3 focus, know that strategies will make success easier. You might even discover, as others have, that you will not displease others by being a Stage 3 teacher. You might find many people absolutely delighted that you can teach in inspiring ways. You will also discover that you will not slight subject matter mastery by becoming a Stage 3 teacher. In fact, we know of no better way to advance learning than by teaching in a way that inspires students to apply the very best they have to daily schoolwork.

## Strategy 33-13: Apologizing

**Purpose:** To model behavior that is healthy for mature relationships.

**Description:** Honestly apologizing to a student, modeling respectful social behavior.

It's strange how often apologies are misused. Some people feel they should never admit being wrong. Others feel they are always admitting they are wrong. yet an apology can be healthful for all concerned if it is clean, caring and honest – especially if it comes from a teacher. "I'm sorry," we might say, "that i nagged so much yesterday about your lab reports. I wish I hadn't done that. Now for today's lesson..." Just a simple statement, without elaboration or discussion, can work wonders.

We might also encourage students to learn the art of apologizing, perhaps saying something like this:

Class, I'd like to see us apologize when we make a mistake and hurt someone. As you will probably notice, I will apologize from time to time. Sometimes I get too impatient, or too irritable, or too tired, or too something... I might snap at someone or sometimes snap at the whole class. I may not realize that until later. In those cases, I like to come back and say I'm sorry once I get a better perspective.

I might say to someone for example, "I'm sorry I got so angry and talked to irritably yesterday. No one deserves such treatment. I hope I didn't hurt your feelings. I don't want to hurt you or anybody else. It's just that sometimes I am unable to do better. I'm sorry if I hurt you." You, too, might apologize in class sometimes. It clears the air. It often dissolves guilt. It helps keep a group running smoothly. Usually it makes us all feel a bit closer.

To give us a bit of practice now, imagine you have made a mistake and acted in a way that was not your best self. Maybe start by imagining what you could say or do that might be hurtful to someone. Then write possible words you might say, maybe the next day, to that person. After a few moments, I'll ask you to share your ideas with a partner. Maybe someone would be willing to role-play such talk for us all. Let's see what we can learn about phrasing apologies.

Such a lesson may be unnecessary. Simply modeling the behavior – that is, simply apologizing in the classroom when you do something you regret – often leads students to pick up on the strategy and begin to apologize to each other more often. Such behavior can contribute substantially to a healthy class community.



*"The Humility of a good teacher makes him courageous. He does not turn away from whatever may be lowly and uninviting in the school and in the students. He welcomes them with kindness and mildness; without showing any distaste, he puts up with their natural defects: their rudeness, their ineptitude, the flaws in their character. He patiently bears with their indocility, impoliteness, ingratitude, opposition, and even insults without yielding to resentment or revenge, even when these faults are directed at him personally. Still, he does not forget that he must always repress whatever might weaken his authority and give rise to disorder, insolence, lack of application, or other forms of misconduct in the part of the students..."*