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The 12 Virtues Series

Information collected from around the globe.

Thanks to all contributors past and present!

The 12 Virtues of a Good Teacher - Gravity

- "Gravity is a virtue that regulates the exterior of a teacher."
- The teacher's "glance is assured and serene, without either affectation or severity."
- "Since he is convinced that Gravity, modesty, and reserve do not exclude kindness or tender affection, he seeks by his loveable qualities to win the friendship of the students. . . . He does not, however, show himself too free with them, nor does he entertain any familiarity or intimacy with any of them."
- "Far from seeking to make them fear him, his main aim is to win his students' confidence, the better to know the virtues they may possess, so as to cultivate and develop them; and the more easily to discern their vices and defects, in order to correct these, if not entirely, at least as far as he can."
- "He carefully eliminates from his behavior whatever might smack of harshness, overbearingness, and bluster."
- "He does not allow himself negligent or immodest attitudes, too much playfulness, any frivolity, any buffoonery, or whatever might suggest trifling."
- "Students will not listen to what is taught them by a master whom they cannot look up to. Hence he never forgets his duty of being for them a continual model of all the virtues."

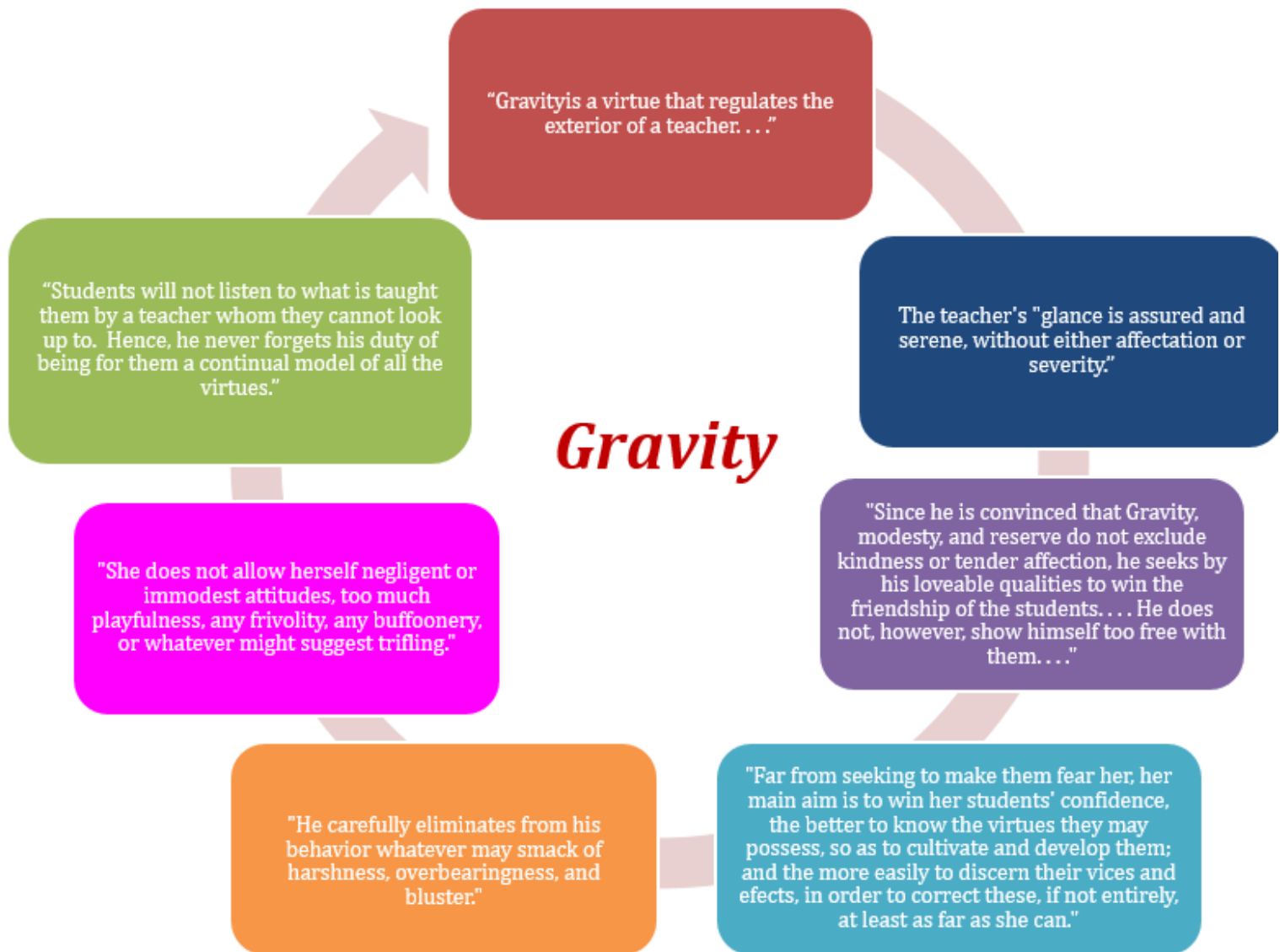


A Question:

How must you behave so that you will be taken seriously by your students?



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For Reflection

What statement speaks especially to you and your educational responsibilities?

What does this virtue look like in action?

How does one exercise gravity towards oneself?

How do you know when your gravity is effective?



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GRAVITY (Seriousness)

A virtue that regulates the exterior of a teacher conformably to modesty, politeness and good order.



Strategy 3-4: Efficient Classroom Structures

Purpose: To develop efficient routines for student learning.

Description: Settling on a few classroom routines that maximize learning and ease teaching.

<p>Boredom setting in Students tuning out</p> <p>PRACTICE TOO SLOW</p> <p><i>Speed up or change to more involving activity</i></p>	<p>GOOD PACING</p>	<p>Frustration rising Students giving up</p> <p>PACING TOO FAST</p> <p><i>Slow down or change to more manageable activity</i></p>
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Some lesson plans work so well that they can be profitably turned into regular classroom routines. Once students learn these routines, the classroom develops a structure that is familiar to students, and that often eases our teaching chores and maximizes student learning. As examples, below are three structures for a day's learning experiences that teachers have found particularly efficient.

Structure 1: Highlighting Independent Work time

The first structure is especially noteworthy because it provides time for students to learn independently both before and after the new lesson of the day. This structure uses eight elements. A discussion of each element follows the classroom example.

A Classroom Example:



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1. Immediate work assignment. Students know that as soon as they enter the classroom they are to begin work on the posted *DO NOW* task (Strategy 6-1)¹. Today's *DO NOW* includes a quote. Students are to write a reaction to it in their personal journals. While students are doing this, the teacher can take attendance and attend to other housekeeping chores.

2. Independent homework review. After finishing their *DO NOW* task, students know they are then to form pairs. With their partner they compare answers to yesterday's homework, using a strategy called Homework Sharing Pairs (Strategy 10-1)².

3. Independent tasks: As students finish their homework review they work with individually created sets of Study Cards (Strategy 6-3)³.

¹ Strategy 6-1: *DO NOW* **Purpose:** To engage students productively as soon as they enter the room. **Description:** Providing independent work for students to handle as soon as they arrive. -- Rather than delaying teaching until all students have arrived and we are ready to teach, we can establish a standing instruction that informs students they are to handle an announced task as soon as they enter the room. Some possibilities include asking students to: (1) Write thoughts about a posted quote or question of the day; (2) Solve a problem on the board or overhead and then create a new problem in the same style; (3) Draw something to illustrate a math concept or a line from a poem or an idea from social studies; (3) Time themselves and in one minute see how many ways they can produce a sum of 25, write words that rhyme with "slay," list states or rivers, or perform an such task; (4) Write a personal self-management goal for the day. The idea is to create a brief initial task so students waste no time and lose no energy waiting for activities to get underway. It also gives us time to prepare lesson materials, take attendance or consult with individual students. What do students do after finishing the *DO NOW* task? It is helpful to have a catch-all activity available. If students have homework to be checked, they might proceed to a homework review or move on to other independent task. It is often useful to begin class by randomly sampling one or two of the students' *DO NOW* responses. That can add a bit of fun and intrigue to the activity as students wonder, "Will I be called on today?"

² Strategy 10-1 Homework Sharing Pairs **Purpose:** To maximize academic learning and advance self-responsibility. **Description:** We could simply ask students to pair up in class and compare their homework. If the homework involved right/wrong answers, those could be posted or read aloud at the outset. We might tell students they are to teach each other when one person in the pair understands more than the other, and when both are unsure, they are to ask another pair for help. We might also tell students that if they finish and time still remains, they are to create new questions for each other or to review past content in some appropriate way.

³ Strategy 6-3: Study Cards **Purpose:** To help students commit basic information to memory and to develop student study skills. **Description:** Asking students to create and study a set of cards containing material to be memorized. Students often need to memorize math facts, spelling words, scientific information, definitions of key terms, and the like. Study cards have proven to be valuable for this task. (1) *Creating cards:* Students create a set of cards for themselves in class or as homework perhaps using three-by-five cards, with each card having one item to be memorized. The front of a card might have a vocabulary word, for example, the back might contain a sample sentence and a definition and, if the student chooses, a picture. Students might also decorate their cards. (2) *Categorizing cards:* Students then separate their cards into two categories, those with information they already know and those needing some attention. Students might store cards in two separate envelopes, perhaps marked "Know" and "Not yet". (3) *Studying cards:* Students then study on their own. Perhaps brainstorm with the class different times and way students might study the cards -- first thing in the morning, before going to sleep, drilling with a partner, and so on. And perhaps provide a few minutes in class for students to study cards in any way they choose. Instruct students to move cards from the "Not yet" envelope to the "Know" envelope whenever they feel confident to do so. (4) *Checking progress:* Regularly assess student progress, perhaps by having students meet weekly in pairs to test each other on the cards in their "know" envelopes, with a note signed by their partners verifying that the enclosed items were mastered. (5) *Appreciating progress:* To help students monitor their progress and appreciate their success, consider asking them to keep a private chart of how many cards they mastered each week. You might also offer special recognition when students show they mastered a certain number of items in a certain time period, with each student's threshold set individually, so the challenge is fair for all (To define the challenge, after they are familiar with the process, ask students to identify how many cards they learned each week for three weeks. Average those three numbers and that number becomes each student's "base" rate. The challenge is to meet or beat the base rate each week thereafter.) The Study Card strategy is highly flexible and self-managing. It allows each student to pursue independent learning geared to individual pace and style. Students who learn quickly are not bored or held back, and those requiring more time need not feel either pressured or inadequate.



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1. **Attention Getting.** The teacher uses a nonverbal Hand-Raising Signal to call the class together. When the class is fully attentive, the teacher asks for two volunteers to read what they wrote in response to the day's quote, using Set of Speakers (Strategy 16-5)⁴. *About 2 minutes.*
2. **Quick Review.** The teacher asks five quick questions that review prior material. For each question students write a response, which the teacher puts on the board while the students were writing. (Review Test, Strategy 11-1)⁵. *About 5 minutes.*
3. **Daily lesson.** The teacher then introduces the new material of the day, which today involves a lecture-discussion. At the end of the lesson, the teacher asks students to write what they learned in the form of Outcome Sentences. *About 15 minutes.*
4. **Independent tasks.** When students finish writing, they return to independent tasks. Most continuing with their Study Cards, although some choose another task from a posted list of options (which includes work at a learning center and independent reading) *About 5 minutes.*
5. **Wrap-up.** The teacher announces the day's homework assignment and then has a few students report one of their Outcome Sentences, using Whip Around, Pass Option (Strategy 16-4). *About 3 minutes.*



GRAVITY

⁴ Strategy 16-5 Set of Speakers **Purpose:** To select speakers efficiently. **Description:** Requesting volunteers to speak and, then, from all volunteers, choosing a set that will take turns speaking. Rather than calling on one student at a time during the discussions, we can occasionally select a set of students to speak. "How many would be willing to share ideas?" we might ask. As hands go up, we point to some students; "Let's hear from five people today. You be first, You be second." And we continue until we have identified a set of five. We then ask the first person to speak. All students then tend to relax and pay attention. The speakers know their turns are coming up, and they know the order in which they will speak. The rest of the class knows the next bit of time is organized and they need not worry about whether or not to volunteer. Set of Speakers makes it easier to avoid calling repeatedly on the same students and to notice the more tentative hand-raising students who are almost ready to respond. We can often prompt more volunteers by saying something like, "How about some volunteers from those who have not spoken lately?" Or "Simpson, I see you might be willing to be one of the speakers. Are you?" It is easier for the reserved student to volunteer to be part of a set of speakers than to be a solo speaker.

⁵ Strategy 11-1: Review Test. **Purpose:** To keep all students involved in reviewing subject matter with many experiences of success. **Description:** Posting a set of review questions and having students (1) write answers and (2) immediately check their work against the provided correct answer. The Review Test covers material previously introduced in class. The "test" is for the students alone. Their challenge. To answer as many correctly as they can.



GRAVITY (SERIOUSNESS) The 1st virtue of a good teacher

Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.

Opening Song

Oh Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder

Oh Lord, my God, when I in awesome won - der, con si - der

all the worlds thy hand has made, I see the stars, I hear the rol - ling

thun - der, thy power through - out the un - i - verse dis - played.

Chorus

Then sings my soul, my Sa - viour God, to thee: How great thou

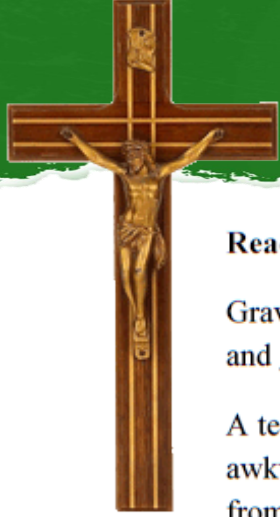
art, how great thou art. Then sings my soul, my Saviour God, to

thee: How great thou art. how great thou art.

2. And when I think that God, his son not sparing,
Sent him to die, I scarce can take it in
That on the cross, my burden gladly bearing,
He bled and died to take away my sin.

3. When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation
And take me home, what joy shall fill my heart;
When I shall bow in humble adoration,
And there proclaim; my God, how great thou art.

Words: Karl Boberg, translated by Stuart K. Hine
Music: Swedish folk melody, arranged by Michael Irwin



Reading from Brother Agathon 1785, translated by Brother Gerard Rummery 1998

Gravity is a virtue which regulates the exterior of a teacher, conformably to modesty, politeness, and good order.

A teacher possessing this virtue holds his body in a natural position, without either affectation or awkwardness. He exhibits in all his external appearance the restraint and decorum which result from the maturity of his mind, from his piety and his wisdom. Above all, he takes care to preserve calm through his even temper and good humour.

Since gravity carried too far would make him ridiculous and obnoxious, he keeps it within appropriate limits. Thus, this virtue, properly understood, establishes good order in a class and inspires the students with confidence and respect in regard to the teacher himself.

Our response from *Titus 2 and 3 and 1 Timothy 4*

Side One: In all things you yourself must be an example of good behaviour. Be sincere and serious in your teaching.

Side Two: Use sound words that cannot be criticized so that your enemies may be put to shame by not having anything bad to say about us.

Side One: Do not let anyone look down on you because you are young, but be an example for the believers in your speech, your conduct, your love, faith and purity.

Side Two: I want you to give special emphasis to these matters, so that those who believe in God may be concerned with giving their time to doing good deeds, which are good and useful for everyone.

Side One: But avoid stupid arguments, quarrels, and fights about the Law. They are useless and worthless.

Side Two: Practise these things and devote yourself to them, in order that your progress may be seen by all.

Side One: If you give these instructions to the believers, you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, as you feed yourself spiritually on the words of faith.

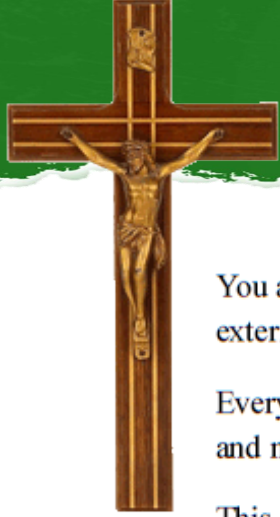
Side Two: Teach these things and use your full authority as you encourage and rebuke your hearers. Let none of them look down on you.

All: Glory be to the Father Amen.

Pause for quiet reflection

Reading from *Christian Politeness* by John Baptist de La Salle

In a person's deportment there must always be something sedate and even majestic. You should take care, however, that there be nothing in this which suggests pride or arrogance of spirit, for such attitudes greatly displease everyone. What will produce this sedateness is the simple modesty and wisdom that as a Christian you display in all your conduct.



You are truly of noble birth since you belong to Jesus Christ and are a child of God. Hence in your exterior there should be nothing vulgar.

Everything in you should denote a certain air of nobility and greatness, a reflection of the power and majesty of God whom you serve.

This dignified appearance should not flow from arrogance or lead you to prefer yourself to others, for every Christian should show honour and respect to all others, considering them as children of God and brothers of Jesus Christ.

Our response from *Meditations 205 and 206* of John Baptist de La Salle

Side One: The judgment that Jesus will make after you die is a very serious one, as it will be about the souls of the children he has given you to look after.

Side Two: You must be convinced of this that God will begin by making you give an account of their souls before making you give an account of your own.

Side One: When you took responsibility for them, you committed yourself to procure their salvation with as much diligence as your own.

Side Two: God will ask, at your judgment, whether you have worked with wisdom and seriousness, without undue familiarity with those whom you teach.

Side One: This seriousness is what Paul recommended so strongly to Titus: "In all things you must be an example of good behavior, be sincere and serious in your teaching."

Side Two: Seriousness is very necessary for a teacher for if you are not usually serious, your students will not expect to hear you say anything worth listening to.

All: Glory be to the Father....Amen.

Pause for quiet reflection

Intercessions

Closing Prayer

All: God our Father, may we look upon those whom you have entrusted to us as your sons and daughters and therefore deserving of the greatest reverence and respect. Help us to show by the care we take of them that we are earnest in spreading your Word and in leading them to you. Grant us this through Christ our Lord.
Amen



Closing Song Praise to the Lord, the Almighty

Praise to the Lord, the Al- migh - ty, the King of cre-

a- tion: O my soul, praise him, for he is your

health and sal - va - tion. All you who hear, now to his

al- tar draw near, join in pro- found a - do - ra - tion.

2. Praise to the Lord, let us offer
our gifts at his altar;
let not our sins and transgressions
now cause us to falter.
Christ, the High Priest,
bids us all join in his feast.
Victims with him on the altar.

3. Praise to the Lord, oh, let all that
is in us adore him:
All that has life and breath,
come now in praises before him!
Let the Amen sound from
his people again,
now as we worship before him.

Words: Joachim Neander (1650-80),
tr. C. Winkworth
Music: From 'Stralsund Gesangbuch' (1665)

The seriousness demanded of teachers does not consist in having a severe aspect,
in getting angry, or in saying harsh words.(Conduct of Schools)

**St. John Baptist de La Salle, pray for us.
Live Jesus in our hearts, forever!**



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REFERENCES FOR
 THIS ISSUE OF
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THE FOLLOWING ARE
 KINDLY
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- Pages 1-2:
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MANY THANKS FOR
 YOUR TIME, EFFORT
 AND ENERGY IN THE
 CREATION OF THESE
 RESOURCES. YOUR
 GIFT IS IMMENSE.

LIVE
 Jesus
 IN OUR
 HEARTS
 FOREVER

The 10 Commandments of a Serious Teacher

- 1 I shall prepare my lessons well.
- 2 I shall not neglect the brightest, average or slowest.
- 3 I shall be punctual to class.
- 4 I shall treat all my students fairly.
- 5 I shall neither be too aloof nor too familiar.
- 6 I shall do my utmost to keep an even temper.
- 7 I shall not allow students to do what they like.
- 8 I shall devise strategies to ensure a good learning environment in class.
- 9 I shall mark students' work conscientiously.
- 10 I shall be kind but firm.

