

- Encourage students to move quickly at lunchtime and dismissal in order to be able to teach up to the last minute. Each day announce what books the students will need for homework. Call the children by rows or tables to get their items so there is not a bottleneck situation at the closet.
- Have days that you work really hard to push the students so when the practices for the Christmas Pageants come or you have some nice activities, students may enjoy them more knowing the work has been completed

When you find yourself longing for the extra time to teach, review this list and see what you can do with the time that you have. You may be surprised that tweaking your daily schedule and ensuring the best use of time, may lead to an additional thirty to forty five minutes in your day.

Time Saved with Self-Correcting Google Forms

Google – G Suite for education - has many time saving apps for teachers. Front load your time by learning the apps, and you will greatly benefit from it. During this season, challenge yourself to learn all there is about Google Forms.

Google Forms for formative assessment

Google continues to improve their services offered to their customers and with Google being free, who would not be their customer? Save yourself time and save our country a tree by using Google Forms. Simply log into your Google – Gmail account. In the waffle located in the upper right hand corner, click on the *Forms* icon that is pictured here. Click on blank



quiz and name your quiz. The first question should always be name. After this add a section that will now be your quiz. Although you may have short and paragraph questions, multiple choice and true and false questions work best for self grading quizzes. Write your questions and then click on answer key. Click on the correct answer along with the number of points you will give the question. Under settings, the teacher may opt to immediately tell the student if they answered correctly, receive their score at the end of the quiz, or wait until the teacher releases the grade. Once you have your quiz generated, you may share with your class by a link or on google classroom. Please note that in the past, a teacher needed an add-on of *flubaroo* to

mark the quiz. Currently, the quiz may be graded directly in the forms app.

Google Forms for Collecting Information

Google Forms may be used to collect information about the students. While the office will have the data information that you may need, consider customizing the information for yourself. Make a form for name, address, telephone number, email address. Ask students what they like and what they would like to see improved in school. The form will collect the information in a Google Sheet – similar to an Excel file that the teacher may filter to get the needed information.

Google Forms are Great for a Quick Poll

Do you every give your students choices about field trips, lunch time videos, or what day would they like to choose for a dress down day? Create a quick poll and you will have your answers immediately. You may also create a Google form for Student Council Elections. The students themselves could create the form and launch the election.

Time to Get Ready for Advent



Advent, which means coming, begins four Sundays before Christmas and the Sunday closest to the feast of St. Andrew on November 30th. This year, Christmas will be on a Monday making the Advent Season the shortest possible – three weeks and one day. You will not have the opportunity to light the fourth Advent Candle in school. Because the season is so short, make sure you are ready for the beginning.

Take the time to search YouTube for Advent videos. This four minute video from YouTube is among the best and well worth the time showing to grades five and above along with sharing with your parents:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSsMq6UXXwo>. Just a reminder - always preview YouTube clips and videos prior to showing them to your class.

There are many websites worth visiting to get ideas. Visit *The Religion Teacher* site at: <https://www.thereligionteacher.com/advent-activities/> While the site is not as physically attractive as others, it contains links to many sites. While there, sign up on the right hand side of the page for the Religion Teachers Guide to Planning. You will receive a sixty plus page PDF chuck full of ideas. Loyola Press also has some very nice information for your professional and personal spiritual life for Advent: <https://www.loyolapress.com/our-catholic-faith/liturgical-year/advent/activities>



For personal use, consider using this website: <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/advent>. There are many nice video clips for each Sunday of Advent. This site offers great spiritual advice throughout the year.

Don't forget when making those Christmas Crafts to send home to Mom and Dad to make them spiritual as well. Everyone loves to receive a hand crafted Nativity complete with the child's name and year created on the bottom. Pinterest, <https://www.pinterest.com/> offers many teacher-created and tried ideas that will work in your classroom.

In the older grades, teach the children the Special Christmas Prayer or Novena of St. Andrew listed below. St. Andrew was the first apostle and as we begin the new liturgical year, this prayer is associated with him. From the Feast of **Saint Andrew the Apostle** (11/30) to Christmas (12/25) one may begin a special prayer, simply called the "Christmas Prayer" to obtain favors if one's requests are in accordance with God's will. It is believed that whoever recites the following prayer with a pious heart **15 times a day** from 11/30 to 12/25, will obtain whatever is asked. On a side note, this prayer has been very successful when prayed for someone to have a baby.

Saint Andrew Christmas Novena

Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. In that hour, vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, O my God! to hear my prayer and grant my desires, (mention your intention here) through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ, and of His Blessed Mother. Amen
(Say 15 times every day from 11/30 to 12/25 for a special favor)



One Final Thought - A Thanksgiving Idea

Thanksgiving is a time to appreciate the many gifts that God has given us. People are the greatest gifts we have received. Consider giving each child and yourself a class list with everyone's name on it, including your own. For homework, the students and you are given a week to write something positive and nice that they like about each person in the class.



Go to the computer lab and have each of the children write their name on a Word Document or Google Doc and then tell them to stand and move to the computer on the right. Moving to the next computer, the student looks at the name on the top, and types in what they wrote about that child. When complete, they move to the computer on the right until they have written something about each one in the class – including you. The last child to write on the screen is asked to type the date on the bottom and save the document.

You may choose to have the documents sent to your Google Classroom, email, or just saved on the desktop. Either you or an older class of children should come in and open the documents. Make them look fancy using a nice font and size. Print off the papers on good paper even considering using specialty computer paper. Save the papers to give to the children at a time you feel is most appropriate – Christmas – or sometime during winter when everyone needs a pick me up. Be sure to read all the papers before you distribute them and make adjustments where needed. You may be surprised that this is the assignment the children will forever remember about your class.



This thought is taken from the Internet where a teacher did this and the students retained the paper throughout their life with many carrying the paper with them at all times. It is listed several times on the Internet and the following link is worth opening in regards to this story:

An Unforgettable Classroom Experience: <http://www.kindspring.org/story/view.php?sid=7854>

On a totally different note, there are many nice, inspiring stories posted on the Internet and many will come through to your Facebook account. To check the accuracy of a story, go to <https://www.snopes.com/>. The above story did occur. In most instances, part of the story happened. You would actually be able to use some of these stories to teach oral history and show how “whisper down the lane” is a lived reality.



Sources are listed within the text.

For additional information regarding the IHM Best Practices contact Sister Margaret Rose Adams, IHM at smgtadams@gmail.com.

11-17