

Teaching Tip: Top Tools of the Trade

Every trade has its associated tools. Fortunately, teachers' tools can be quite cheap. Here is a list of tools that I always have on stand by. If you teach often, you may want to consider a dedicated drawer or box or envelope full of these supplies. I use pencil boxes as well as plastic envelopes (the kind with the string to tie them closed) to organize each lesson I teach. I put my lesson plan along with all of my materials in a plastic envelope. I paperclip things together for easy access during the lesson. Whatever is too big (markers, pens, videos) I bring with me in a box. I keep all these supplies together in my study so that I don't waste time looking for them every time I am going to teach. Ah, the simplicity of it all!

1. **Scrap paper!!** I steal scrap paper from the recycling at my church. It is abundant and I consider it a good deed to recycle it for them. It even comes in many sizes and colours. Almost every church and office will have a bountiful supply of scrap paper. They will be happy to give it to you. I keep different sizes paper clipped together for different needs. It is my most used supply.
2. **Pens.** Every youth worker needs a box, bag, can, or container of some sort full of pens. The presence of pens in a lesson indicates from the get go that students will be required to do something.
3. **Fine tipped markers.** At the youth ministry in my church, we have a "Sharpie Hole," a box full of Sharpie markers that the students use regularly to brainstorm on chart paper. Sharpie markers are a good choice.
4. **Whiteboard pens.** Only if you have a whiteboard, of course. I like having them in a variety of colours. Very useful.
5. **Paper clips.** Seriously. Keep stuff together.
6. **TV/VCR.** I find TV/VCR infinitely easier to work with than DVD because it stays where you want it to. Also, VHS tapes are cheap to buy for repeat use. You might even get someone to donate a VCR to your group when they replace it with a DVD player at home. A DVD player is good too.
7. **LEGO or coloured blocks.** You can use these for building models and metaphors. Have students create a LEGO version of the tabernacle or use blocks to recreate their conversion story. Your tactile students will thank you!

Am I missing some that you think are priceless? Let me know. Drop me a line at yme@baptist.ca. I love learning new things!