

FingerPoints

FEBRUARY 2006 EDITION

E-Newsletter for *Teaching Is Too Important to Take Seriously*

Welcome to February, the Month in the Middle!

We are in the middle of so many things this month, that sometimes it's hard to stop and catch a breath. However, that is why we must remember to stop... and laugh. We need to laugh because February can be the breaking point for

so many students (and adults.) We need to laugh and push our way through because Spring Break is just around the corner (okay it's a big corner.)

Scott Endres

The Finger of the Month - #3 Smile, Damn It! Smile!

When thinking about what finger to cover this month I got stuck, just like many of us do during February. Though it is the shortest month of the school year, it can definitely seem the longest. We are far enough from the winter break that it seems in the distant past, and spring break is not close enough to be any hope. Add into the mix, that if you live in a cold weather area, your students are getting outside less and expending less energy before they get to your classroom, and it is easy to see how February can be a month where we are just struggling to get through.

For all of these reasons and more (need I mention Valentine's Day), we must continue to push through and remember to Smile, Damn It! Smile! (or feel free to use the edited version Smile! Smile! Smile!) The idea behind Smile, Damn It! Smile! is that smiling, and laughter, are contagious. We have all seen how a negative attitude can change a meeting or a group of people. Well, smiling can have the same effect, but during these long, dark winter nights we need to remember to push ourselves to smile.

Over the next month, pick a goal to promote the Smile, Damn It! Smile! attitude. Maybe

you can commit to making sure no matter how you feel, once a student comes into your room, you have a smile on your face. Or you could challenge yourself to say "Good Morning" with every adult you meet at school, and commit to doing it, no matter if they ignore you or even grunt at you. The other end of this idea is to concentrate on making sure to say "Have a Good Day" after every meeting with a person.

Now some of you may not feel comfortable committing to a month long project, but how about something for only a week? For that I would suggest sponsoring a week long theme for your staff. For example, the week of February 6-10 in one school I work in will celebrate the 2nd Annual Tropical Shirt Week. This started last year by two teachers that just wanted to do something to mix things up and didn't really care if they were the only ones who did it, which was a distinct possibility, because this is a very conservative school. However, by the end of the week they had nearly 70% of the teachers wearing some kind of tropical shirt.

So, push on this February, continue to Smile, Damn It! Smile! and remember that not only is smiling contagious, but so is bad clothing.

This Just In!

On January 31st, the Association of Applied and Therapeutic Humor (AATH) named *Teaching Is Too Important to Take Seriously!* as its **2004-2005 Book of the Year**. The AATH is an international community of professionals who incorporate humor into their daily lives and is a leader in providing current research and practical applications of humor.

If you would like to bring the power of humor to your school contact Scott Endres at **502-420-8584** or **scott@paperwadideas.com** to schedule a workshop, an opening day presentation or to find out how to order this award winning book.



These are the Days of Our Lives

February is a strange month for holidays. Maybe it has something to do with that this a time of year when we are all struggling to get through, because it sure seems like these "holidays" are a struggle. Anyway, remember these are real holidays celebrated by someone, somewhere. So just celebrate!

Month

National Hot Breakfast Month

Pet Dental Health Month

Cat Health Month

Grapefruit Month

Return Shopping Carts to the Supermarket Month

Weeks

5-11 Get Paid to Shop Week

6-10 Just Say No to Powerpoints Week (The powerpoint can be downloaded on website.)

6-10 National School Counseling Week

6-12 Tropical Shirt Week

8-14 Love Makes the World Go Round; But Laughter Keeps Us From Getting Dizzy Week

12-18 Jell-O Week

13-19 International Flirting Week

14-20 Random Acts of Kindness Week

17-21 Great Backyard Bird Count Week

26-3/4 National Pancake Week

Days

1 Robinson Crusoe Day

14 Ferris Wheel Day

2 Hedge Hog Day

20 Northern Hemisphere Hoodie Hoo Day

2 Bonza Bottler's Day

22 Inconvenience Day

6 Pay A Compliment Day

23 Curling Is Cool Day

7 Wave All Your Fingers at Your Neighbors Day

26 For Pete's Sake Day

7 Dump Your Significant Other Day

28 National Tooth Fairy Day

8 Laugh and Get Rich Day

28 Paczki(?) Day

11 White Shirt Day

Throwing the Flag on Your Students

With the Super Bowl upon us, it is the time of year I pull out my whistle and yellow flag and start assessing penalties in my classroom. At this point of the year we are all tired of each other and to break things up, I start throwing flags. The penalties are still the same for classroom infractions, but I have found that this way I can actually get a student I am disciplining to laugh, instead of butting heads with them for the 100th time. Below are some possible infractions you can call.

Illegal Procedure - student talking out of turn or over another person.

Interference - student interfering with another student's education

Offsides - student out of there seat or late

Unsportsmanlike Conduct - the catch all for student distractions

