

**Reflection Paper**  
**By**  
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I jumped at the opportunity to observe at Happy Days Preschool which is a part of Bachelor Creek Church of Christ. Happy Days happens to be the preschool that I had attended in my younger years. I now attend Bachelor Creek and am close friends with the wonderful ladies who teach at Happy Days; I thoroughly enjoyed my weekly visits.

Every Thursday morning I would travel the short distance to the preschool and join their morning circle. The preschool is made up of a total of four rooms; two upstairs and two downstairs. Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday from nine until eleven are the days the older children attend school. On Thursdays, when I visited, the younger children (usually three years old or just turning four) occupied the second floor rooms.

When I first arrived, I would sit on the floor of the upstairs first room and join in on the morning's routine activities. There were eight children and each would take a turn choosing a nursery rhyme and they would accompany the riddles with motions. Then they would continue their morning with the pledges to the American flag, the Christian flag, and the Holy Bible.

Afterwards, the weather person would look out the window and describe the weather and stick a picture of a sun, cloud, duck, or snowflake on the calendar. Moving on to the days of the week and what day of the month it was, a child would stick the appropriate number on the calendar. The head teacher would then grab the show and tell bag and the selected child would share what it is they had brought with the class. The next task was observing the picture board; which was a bulletin board that showcased pictures of a particular student for the whole week.

Each child had a chance to do or share something before both of the teachers would introduce the morning activity. The activity would be different each morning; one particular activity I remember was a memory game. An array of pictures with a twin was spread out upside down in rows in the center of our little circle. Students took turns turning over what they hoped would be a match and if it wasn't then they would turn the pictures back over and the turn would continue to the next child. Practicing memory skills is very important and so most of the activities that took place involved some extent in memorization.

The activity completed all the necessary tasks for that room and so the line leader would lead the way to the activities room next door. The activities room is much bigger than the previous room and holds a variety of different work/play stations; there are nine stations in all. Nancy Jo Hammel was in charge of the science table and would show the children a homemade science experiment and encourage the children to come back and try it themselves during their free time.

Other stations included: the sandbox, the snack table, the occupation corner, the reading nook, activities shelves, painting/coloring, the cut and paste worksheet table, and the crafts table; I usually guided the crafts so I could see what was going on in the other stations while I helped make a clown or a kite.

Once free time was in place, the children had the freedom to choose any station to start with. The only stations that were required for the child to participate in by the end of the day, were the crafts and the cut and paste worksheets. As soon as the child

completed those tasks a check mark is placed by their name by the teacher and they could migrate between the other stations.

Both of the teachers kept an eye out so a student doesn't spend the majority of their time in one particular station. In the case of the popular sandbox, only two students are allowed to play at once and a timer was set for so many minutes to give others the chance to play. At the snack table, a sign is put up showing how much of the snack each child is allowed and they retrieve that amount on their own; they also assist in cleaning up their own mess.

All the children were well behaved; discipline was needed only on rare occasions. I was very surprised at how well the students listened and paid attention to their teachers and the concept they were teaching. I considered the possibility that since the children knew their teachers from attending church and developing a relationship outside the classroom, which could have helped with behavioral situations.

The environment was friendly and the children felt and embraced the positive ambiance. I have always had a sense of panic almost when it comes to managing thirty or so young children while at the same time keeping my classroom full of creative, and constructive learning experiences. However, while observing Kathy Henderson (the head teacher) and Nancy Jo interacting with the children in an almost effortlessly way; it encouraged me to embrace a naturalistic interaction between myself and my students.

I got the chance to take part in the everyday activities and because of my temporary role as craft lady; the children looked to me for instruction and assistance. I have always considered myself to be a creative person and so I embraced the chance

to teach and observe through arts and crafts. While helping students with their paper plate ladybugs, paper mache ducks, and cutout kites I got a small taste of one on one interaction with my student and I enjoyed it more than I could have ever imagined. They asked me questions about what we were making and why we were making it and I smiled and explained how our craft went along with the arriving holiday or season.

Their eyes would light up when they got excited about something we were doing and the wonder on their faces dissipated the remaining nerves I had had about my teaching career. Their excitement fed mine and together we created not so perfect crafts but an unforgettable connection.