

Six-Week Challenge Incentives and Ideas

Nobody knows how to motivate your classroom better than you do... but here are some ideas on how to get started by using the "Classroom Challenge Chart."

Suggest to the class that if they do the daily challenge, then they should put a check by their name for that day.

Decide on what kind of incentive can be set up for the kids in order to encourage them to go for it. Some schools already use paper tickets such as "kindness bucks" or "consideration cash" as part of a good-behavior incentive program. Handing these out to individuals for each check mark (or week full of check marks) may work well. If this is not something your school does, the idea is that they can save up to "buy" a prize or privilege.

Another idea for an incentive is to have some sort of mini-celebration/party/movie day at the end of a week or two if you see that, let's say, at least one or two hundred boxes are checked.

To make sure that kids are actually doing the challenges and not just checking boxes, have random sharing moments throughout the day (or at the end of the day) where you pick a few checked names off the list and have them briefly share what they did. This doesn't have to be a pouring-out of souls; "Today I held a door for someone and felt pretty good about that." If you find that kids are too shy to share out loud, they can write down their experiences or tell you privately.

Something to keep in mind is that sometimes the daily challenges have kids trying to actually DO something, while other days it just has them thinking. Even if a kid doesn't DO a challenge, I feel that sharing a thought or an opinion about the challenge should count too.

Note: Students should leave out other people's names from their experiences to avoid embarrassing them.

(Side note: If you feel like kids are bluffing a little on their stories, I personally don't think this is a big deal because they are at least thinking about what kindness looks like.)

Using the "Personal Challenge Chart"

Either in place of or in addition to the classroom chart, you can give a personal chart to each kid and have them simply fill it in with their experiences every day. Check them at the end of each day or each week to award incentive tickets.

An option for not using the charts

Another idea that I really love is that each student simply writes down what they did (or thought about) for the daily challenge and gives it to you. They can sign the paper or keep it anonymous. When they hand it to you, read it and give them an incentive ticket that they can later cash in for some benefit that works for your class. At the end of the day, you can choose to read the kids' experiences aloud (omitting any names for privacy). Reading them aloud should help others in the class see how simple it is to join in and may encourage them to try. It will also validate those students who went for it so that they keep on doing it. Big incentive goals for something like a movie day can be reached after collecting one or two hundred handed-in experiences (or whatever amount you think is fair). Something powerful about doing it this way and by saving all of the pieces of paper (in a drawer perhaps) is that at the end of the six weeks, you can show the kids the big pile of papers. If everyone is handing some in every day, the pile should become pretty impressive. Ask them to think about what the people's lives around them would be like without all of those kind acts or moments of reflection. Those pieces of paper represent how the little things in life add up and how your students were active participants in making life better.