

THE PRESCHOOL CONNECTION

WEST OHIO CONFERENCE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH 

The Most Important Tool in Your Classroom Is You

As preschool teachers and directors, you shape young hearts and minds every day. Every interaction we have with a child is filtered through our own experiences, personality, emotions, and beliefs. The way we respond to a child's tears, curiosity, frustration, or excitement is often shaped as much by what is happening inside of us as by what is happening in front of us.

Scripture reminds us of the importance of knowing our own hearts. In Psalm 139:23–24, David prays, “Search me, O God, and know my heart... See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” Healthy leadership—and healthy teaching—begins with this posture of humility, curiosity, and self-awareness.

As educators, we spend countless hours helping children discover who they are, understand their emotions, and learn how to relate to others. Yet one of the most important journeys we can take is understanding ourselves. When we become more aware of our own thoughts, emotions, triggers, and patterns, we are better equipped to respond with patience, compassion, and grace.

Enneagram: A Tool for Growth and Self-Awareness

The Enneagram is one practical tool that can help us better understand the person God created us to be. It is not a label or a box that defines us, but a framework for discovering our core motivations, strengths, fears, and habitual patterns. Through greater self-awareness, we can begin to recognize what drives our reactions, how we respond under stress, and where God may be inviting us to grow.

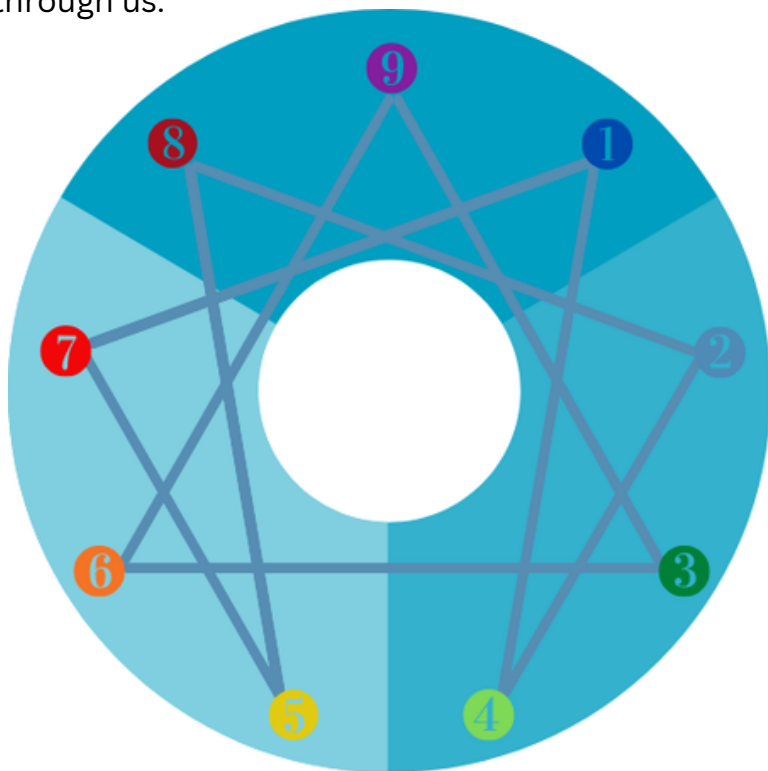
For preschool educators, this awareness can have a powerful impact in the classroom. Understanding our Enneagram type can help us recognize questions such as:

- Why do certain behaviors in children trigger a strong reaction in me?
- How do I respond when I feel overwhelmed, interrupted, or out of control?
- What strengths has God given me that bless the children and families I serve?
- Where might God be inviting me to grow in patience, compassion, or trust?

The Enneagram helps us move from simply managing our reactions to becoming more intentional in how we love and lead. As we become more grounded in who we are and more aware of God's transforming work in our lives, we create classrooms where children experience safety, connection, and belonging.

The greatest gift we bring into our classrooms is not simply what we know—it is who we are becoming. Through ongoing growth, reflection, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we can become educators who reflect the heart of Christ in the way we teach, encourage, and care for every child entrusted to us.

When we allow God to shape our own hearts, our classrooms become places where children experience not only excellent education but also the grace, patience, joy, and love of Christ through us.



The Enneagram

Here are five practices that can strengthen both your classroom and your own spiritual formation:

1. Recognize Your Own Lens. Each of us brings a unique personality, story, strengths, and challenges into the classroom. Becoming aware of our natural tendencies helps us respond thoughtfully rather than react emotionally, especially during stressful moments.
2. Celebrate Every Child's Uniqueness. Children are wonderfully created by God, each with their own temperament, gifts, and way of experiencing the world. Rather than expecting every child to learn, communicate, or behave the same way, we have the privilege of discovering how each child is uniquely wired and helping them flourish.
3. Choose Connection Before Correction. Behavior is often communication. While children need loving boundaries, they also need adults who seek to understand what is happening beneath the surface. Curiosity, empathy, and relationships create the foundation for lasting growth and healthy emotional development.
4. Look for Strengths Before Struggles. Every child has God-given gifts waiting to be nurtured. When we intentionally notice and affirm those strengths, children begin to develop confidence while learning how to navigate their growing edges with encouragement rather than shame.
5. Release the Pressure to Be Perfect. There is no perfect teacher. God is not asking us to perform flawlessly; He is inviting us to remain faithful, teachable, and dependent on Him. Children benefit most from adults who model humility, grace, resilience, and a willingness to keep growing.

This information was shared by Suzanne Bandy, an Enneagram and Executive Coach. She and her husband Jeff serve the congregation of Xenia Faith Community. For more information about the enneagram please contact Suzanne - suzbandy121@gmail.com. Here is a free test: [https://myenneagramtest.org/test/?](https://myenneagramtest.org/test/?utm_source=bing&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=487484947&msclkid=9c4b2f9d83ef1a3715ba45cbe2dee708)

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If you have ideas that would be helpful for other preschool staff members or are looking for more resources on a specific topic, please email us and we will include your ideas in future editions of The Preschool Connection.

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