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first days of school

Compiled by: Rebecca

I would let the students give suggestions for your class name. We usually choose one that starts with the same sound as the beginning of my last name (ex. Carter's Cool Cats, Ritter's Rockets, etc.) Then I list all the suggestions on the board and then we take a vote. Students write their favorite on a little slip of paper and turn it in to the basket. We then tally up the points on the board(math).As far as first days activities I concentrate on learning the rules and community building. Here are some that I do.We go over rules in the gym(early morning and assembly), schoolwide, classroom, cafeteria, playground. We discuss why rules are important. We act out scenarios, journal write, draw pictures, make a class book..all on rules.One of the very first things I do on the first day is to write about what they think third grade will be like and write about how they were feeling coming to a new grade. What were their feelings about a new teacher? Then we read, Teacher From the Black Lagoon. We talk about how the boy felt about his teacher and what ended up happening. Then they share their writing (if they want) and we compare that to how they are feeling now that they have arrived at this grade. I do the name game where we get in a circle. We go around the circle with the first person saying their name. Then the second person says person one's name and then their own. Person three says all previous names and then their own and so on. I am usually the last so I have to name everyone. I do this the next day also. They all scramble to get in the number one position but I surprise them and start the opposite way, with me still being last. They love it.I read the book, Chrysanthemum by Kevin Henkes. We talk about how just one person can make someone feel bad about themselves. Since this is a book about names, we make a name tag. I give them die cut letters of their first name and stickers to decorate. They glue these letters on a piece of posterboard cut for a name tag and they decorate. Or they could make a mobile (like a tier) with a circle on top(glue on their picture),hang a triangle under that(list their family members) and then a rectangle under that and cut and glue pictures of things they like to do. You could hang them from the ceiling of your room above each one's desk.I always bring in personal items so I can share (a picture of my family, a craft I have made, my favorite book, etc.)and put them in a brown lunch bag. After I share, then I give them homework. I give each a brown lunch bag. I tell them to fill it with 5 (ONLY 5) items from home that would tell about them. The items MUST fit into the bag or can't be shared. The next day, we take turns letting them share their items. They love this!I read letters written from last year students(you obviously can't do that but can next year). These letters are written like.... "Dear new third grader", This is what you should know about third grade.....They like to hear these especially if one is from a brother or sister.Sorry this is so long. I hope you can use atleast some of these ideas. Have a great year!

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