Creating a Learning Environment

In a mutually supportive manner, the Bible study teacher must create an attractive physical and emotional climate within the class setting. If your PWOC uses FITs (Facilitators-In-Training), you and your FIT might divide up the responsibility of ensuring a welcoming environment for learning.

**Physical environment**

Think about your five senses as you consider your meeting space.

- **Sight**: How does my room look? Can I rearrange tables or chairs? Do I need to clean the white/black board? Consider using a simple decoration.
- **Sound**: Are there ways to minimize noises from outside the classroom? Perhaps you could play instrumental music in the background.
- **Smell**: Is there an odd smell? A scented sachet or a dryer sheet may help.
- **Touch/Feel**: Is the room temperature comfortable? Would scented lotion help? Hugs and small, inexpensive gifts are also generally welcomed.
- **Taste**: Is food allowed in your classroom? If not, perhaps small candies or chocolates can be used as a decoration or as part of an icebreaker.

Among others, John C. Maxwell is credited with the saying “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”

**Emotional environment**

Bible study should be an enriching time of personal growth, often marked by vulnerability. When we are transparent, we need an extra measure of acceptance, and an extra measure of prayer. Ways to cultivate emotional intimacy include:

- Learn names and use them often, especially during arrival and departure
- Maintain eye contact and relaxed body posture
- Laugh and play with the ladies as a way of getting to know them
- Encourage group participation in class, perhaps by sometimes breaking the group into smaller groups for sharing, brainstorming or prayer
- Allow women the personal space to share deeply
- If you allow tangents, make them work for you as you return to the topic
- Listen actively by summarizing and affirming what ladies contribute
- Be careful not to adopt the position that you know all the answers because you are the teacher. Have a teachable heart!
- When possible, encourage interactions outside of class, maybe in the form of making meals, celebrating special occasions or having a social outing