



Working Together to Have a Good Square Dance Class

There are 3 types of people who contribute to the good class:
the Caller/Teacher, the Class Coordinator, and the Angels.

1. The caller/teacher should be the best that the club can get. New callers can be mentored and used to teach as a substitute and during the class for 1 tip.
 - A. Callers, it is your responsibility to teach by the definitions to the best of your and the dancers' ability.
 1. Download the definitions, make sure the students have the booklets, let them know about video/DVD help, be able to give the explanations in more than one way.
 2. One introduction is not enough to teach, you need to give a review and both massed and repeated practice.
 3. When teaching adults, do not talk down to them. If possible, find out what the new dancer does/did as an occupation. That may help you reach them with your explanation.
 - a. Adults can walk out the door if they are not having fun.
 - b. Adults also are very intolerant of their own errors, especially if they are or have been in a position of authority in their occupation.
 - B. Each dance class should be as much like a dance as possible
 1. The caller/teacher should try to develop singing calls that use a limited number of calls.
 2. Music, music, music! Do not drill for a long time without playing music.
 3. Mix the students and angels to provide help enough to make the squares smoother.
2. The Class Coordinator should be a friendly person who will work to make the new dancers (students) feel welcome.
 - A. Learn all the names of the members of the class, give a list of names to the caller, so they can learn the names.
 - B. Greet the students and angels by name.
 - C. Have nametags made up with the club name and the new dancer's name. Bring them to the classes yourself.
 - D. Keep a roster of the class so you know who is not there.
 - E. Telephone or e-mail a class member who is missing. Let them know they are missed.
 - F. Advise the caller when a class member has missed a week, so the caller/teacher can make sure they get a good review.
 - G. Keep a rotation of the attending angels each night so all the angels get to dance.
 - H. If possible, have a list of "on call" angels to fill a square if needed. Maybe people who live close, but do not want to come out every week.

3. The angels should also be friendly and good dancers.
 - A. If you feel that you are in need of review, you should sign up as a student, not as an angel!!
 1. You may be able to help in the first part of classes, then convert to a paying student.
 2. The caller and class coordinator will get questions about why an "angel" needs help from a class member.
 - B. An angel is there to give a guiding hand when needed, NOT to push, pull, yell, or teach instead of the caller/teacher.
 - C. If a new dancer approaches you with a question, refer them to the caller/teacher, or bring the question to the caller/teacher yourself. It is not always good to help practice the call with them in the break, you may not give the new dancer the best answer. Let the caller/teacher do it.
 - D. Angels need to show restraint while dancing.
 1. Do not add styling flourishes until the caller says it is OK to do so. New dancers can get turned around easily enough, without extra twirls and shortcuts.
 2. Do not be over anxious to help. Let the newer dancers react to the call and start to move on their own, without verbal or physical help from the angels. If they go the wrong way, or stand there with the "deer in the headlights" look, then gently redirect them.
 3. Do not "jump ahead" during the teaching of a figure. If a figure involves multiple parts or turns, always wait for the instructor to tell you what to do, as if you had never heard the call before. This way you are not confusing the newer dancer by being ahead of where you should, or worse, not being where they expect you to be.
 - E. The caller needs to explain all of the above to the angels before the start of classes, and remind them as necessary.