

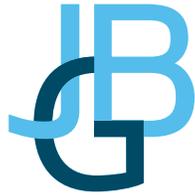
## **Preparing for Jodee Blanco's Visit:**

Thank you for welcoming me to your school. I am deeply honored that you've put your trust in me and I will work hard to exceed expectations. Outlined below are some suggested guidelines that will help to maximize the impact of my visit.

## **Presentation Space and Logistics:**

I'm flexible and can work with whatever you have, but prefer a space that's as quiet and free of distractions as possible. I've listed the presentation spaces most commonly used by schools with some helpful notes:

- **Auditorium or theater**  
This is always a wonderful option. If there's enough room in front of the stage, I'll opt for presenting from the floor. This allows me to utilize the entire space as my performance area, and to walk among the rows of students and make meaningful contact, to *connect* with them at eye-level instead of from a stage above. As far as lighting, turn the house lights up as far they go. Let there be light! I want to see the students and for them to see me. The more well-lit the audience, the more it facilitates that vital, human connection between us.
- **Gym**  
The gym is a good option, too. The key is to eliminate any potential distractions upfront and make the space as performance friendly as possible. For example, if the students are in the bleachers and I'm presenting from the gym floor, any doors or offices behind me should remain closed, to prevent accidental interruptions. Also, the PA system in gyms can be loud and I always recommend that the main office hold any non-urgent announcements until after the presentation.
- **Church or Large Hall**  
Either work well. My only guideline is to double-check if there are any other events or activities scheduled in another part of the building at the same time, and whether it could pose a distraction.
- **Cafetorium**  
This option presents some challenges, but if it's the only available space, we'll make it work together. It's best to schedule the presentation(s) when cafeteria staff aren't setting up or taking down food service. If that's not realistic, I find it helpful if I can meet the cafeteria staff, talk with them, and lovingly ask for their assistance keeping distractions to a



minimum. It can also be a nice gesture to invite them to sit in on the presentation if they'd like. The cafeteria workers are frequently on the frontlines when it comes to observing student bullying and exclusion. Including them is a way of acknowledging how much they're valued and appreciated.

### **Logistics:**

- **Room-Set Up**

I don't need a podium, projector, or screen. When I present, it's just me, speaking from the heart, connecting on a human level with the audience. I always recommend that the set-up, configuration of seats, etc. be whatever the school normally does for assemblies. Changes can be distracting, and the more comfortable students are, the more they'll be able to focus on the message. Also, if students are in chairs or on the floor, I like to have an aisle between the rows if possible.

- **Microphone**

My first choice is always a cordless, handheld mic—handheld because lavaliers and headsets can create more screech/feedback; cordless because it allows me the most freedom. I like to walk out into the audience, all the way to very last row, and a cordless allows me to do that. If the audience is less than 200 people, I won't need a microphone.

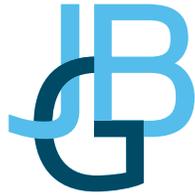
- **Hearing Impaired Students**

If any students are hearing impaired and require an interpreter, it's helpful if I can have moment with the interpreter before the presentation to review any questions he/she may have.

- **Bussing in Students**

It's usually easier for me to travel to each student presentation than to have students bussed to me. Not only is it less expensive for the school, simpler, and more practical, it enables me to speak to students in their own environment. I'm used to giving multiple presentations a day (four to five) and getting myself from one location to the next. And I'm coming there to serve *you*. For me, that means doing whatever necessary to make scheduling and logistics as easy as possible for the school.

That being said, sometimes, if an entire district or diocese has brought me in and there are so many schools participating that consolidating presentations is the only way to make the schedule work, here are some guidelines.



My presentations unfold via a narrative arc like acts in a play. If a busload of students arrives late or must leave early, not only is it distracting for everyone else, but the story won't have the same context. To that end, I always recommend that the principal of the hosting school assign a faculty member to monitor the busses so we can do our best to make sure everyone has arrived before we begin.

**Duration of Presentations:**

Lower School Presentation: 45 minutes

Middle School Presentation: 75 minutes

High School Presentation: 75 minutes

**Tips on Scheduling:**

I'll accommodate whatever works best for the school. Here are some things to keep in mind as you create my itinerary for the day. It's best not to schedule presentations too closely together. Allow ample time in between, a minimum of fifteen to twenty minutes or more if possible. This is especially recommended with the middle and high school presentations, to accommodate any students that may want to talk with me after, need a hug or who are in crisis. I also encourage you to have your school counselors attend the presentations and be available for any students needing extra support.

As far as times of day, I always recommend scheduling the elementary school presentation in the morning when the little ones are at their most energetic and focused, and then, building the rest of the itinerary from there.

**My Contact Info:**

If you have any questions or would like to talk through the schedule or other details, please feel free to reach out. I'll always make myself available.

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Thank you again for your faith and trust. I am SO excited for my visit!

