

Square Dance Class Guidelines for Angels (Less is More)

by Kurt Gollhardt 2024-06-06

A brief word to angels (experienced dancers):

Please keep in mind that as angels you can best help the new students by **being in the right place at the right time** and leading by example. But try not to outpace the students. Their reaction time will be slower; try not to get ahead of them. Give students time to figure things out on their own; **don't help unless they're clearly lost**.

Reach out a **gentle** guiding hand if needed, but **don't yank, pull or push**; don't grab someone's shoulders & steer them. If possible, simply **point** to where they should be going, or hold your open hand up clearly while waiting for someone to connect to you. Remember to always join hands with anyone next to you in a couple, line, or wave.

Please **don't distract the students** by talking **while** we're **dancing** or while **the caller is talking**, even to give them helpful tips, unless it's just to repeat the name of a call that someone didn't hear. Many people, especially when learning, can't focus on more than one speaker at a time. If you feel you have a helpful hint that the teacher has missed, **raise your hand**. During the breaks, **offer** help, in a positive way. (Don't criticize.) Make sure they **want** help.

If you have concerns about a student's ability to keep up, please share them with the caller, class coordinator, or a board member, not with that student (or others) directly.

Finally, remember that this experience can be confusing and overwhelming for new students at the best of times, so **please refrain from any "flourishes", "tricks", or shortcuts, especially any that affect your path or position** in the square (such as doing single circles for Grand Square, **promenading "short"**, or following someone through Load The Boat), **even if not interacting with any students**; they **need to be able to see the normal patterns** of the whole square. And, please, no snap switching or changing roles in the middle of a class tip.

Beyond that, **be encouraging**, and **have fun!**

For (way) more detail, see Barry Clasper's "How May I Help" article at:
<https://clasper.ca/wp-content/uploads/sites/12/2024/02/HOW-MAY-I-HELP.pdf>