

Top Ten Tips for Transformational Teaching

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Learning occurs when learners decide to accept and incorporate new information into their lives. If a person decides - makes a conscious decision - not to learn, there's little a teacher can do to make the student learn. So the focus of effective teaching is the learner, not the teacher.

Engaging learners can be more effective when teachers use some tried-and-true techniques for communicating the Word of God. Certainly prayer, a growing knowledge of the Word, and adequate personal preparation are prerequisites for teaching people the Bible. But here are some additional tips that can make you more effective in moving learners toward success - toward learning what God has for them.

1. Prepare the room. The room is your teaching-learning laboratory. Everything can influence learning. Learners need adequate space in a room that has movable equipment, good lighting, comfortable temperatures, and good visibility.

2. Use effective methods. Every person has a preferred learning approach. Using only one method means that only learners whose learning preference matches the method you use will feel they are learning. Using at least three approaches to learning in any session assures teachers that more learners will be engaged with you as teacher and with the material you teach. [Teaching Adults: A Guide for Transformational Teaching](#) provides a good foundation for understanding learning preferences.

3. Remove barriers. Lecterns and tables can create psychological barriers. Remove items that hinder you in moving around the room, connecting emotionally with learners, and making use of the entire room.

4. Teach learners to reflect. Learners need time to process new information. Allow brief discussion periods, encourage questions, or allow silence with instruction as to how to use the silence to encourage learners to process material. This provides time for learners to consider how the material applies to them.

5. Create a safe environment. Safe emotional and psychological environments are critical. Be sure that no one is put down for incorrect answers. Don't let anyone be ridiculed or teased. Assure everyone that all answers and responses are accepted, and that each person is unconditionally affirmed and important. Encourage expression of feelings.

6. Develop a detailed teaching plan. Flexibility is essential, but know where you intend to be at the end of the session. Identify how you will know whether learners have learned what you intended.

7. Personalize your content. Know what each learner needs from the lesson you are preparing. Keep learners' needs in mind as you teach and be familiar enough with content to change directions as needed.

8. Develop nonverbal skills. Capture attention by locking eyes with learners for several moments at a time when teaching. Call individuals by name. Listen to various perspectives. Watch how others communicate nonverbally.

9. Use persuasion techniques. Use voice inflection, dramatic gestures, dramatic monologues and so forth to add emphasis to teaching.

10. Evaluate! What happens each week should be the beginning point for what will take place next week. Evaluate teaching habits, how many learners participated, who they were, and how they were involved.

Bible study is more than education; it's teaching people the Word of God so that lives are changed and the world becomes better in the process. Most transformational teachers are those who work at becoming more effective each week.

Seven Simple Steps for Bible Study Preparation

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As a Sunday School leader you want your new or experienced teacher to lead an engaging Bible study. You want them to share the joy, challenge, and change experienced in personal Bible study. And beyond that, with each lesson class members should develop skills and habits for group and personal Bible study.

Yet there are so many resources! How do the resources and personal Bible study fit together? Lead your Sunday School teachers to prepare for Bible study by using the following simple steps to study the Scripture, commentary, and teaching plans to develop their own customized teaching plan.

1. Read the passage several times, writing down Bible study questions and researching the answers before reading the Leader Guide commentary or teaching plan.

- Prayerfully read the passage.
- Record questions that arise in your mind that you need answered to better understand the passage. Don't think about the learners, and don't worry if the questions can be definitively answered. Record as many questions as possible.
- Circle the key words and repeated phrases in the passage.
- Underline any questions you find in the passage. Are the questions answered? Consider if the question or an adaptation of the question might help your study of the passage.
- Review the verses just prior to and after the passage. Do these verses help you understand the lesson? How? Do other verses come to mind that clarify the study of this passage? If so, read these verses as well as those cross-referenced in your Bible. Write questions about these verses that lead to a greater understanding of the passage.
- Seek answers to these questions using only your Bible and other translations. Don't worry about finding a precise answer. Just develop your Bible study skills.

- Throughout your study ask God to show you how the passage applies to you. Based on the passage, write and answer questions that challenge you to change your thoughts, behaviors, or spirit.

2. Change your personal Bible study questions into group discussion questions. Carefully sequence these questions to guide learners in a discovery of the truths and applications of the lesson.

3. Check the quality of your questions. Keep only the best questions.

- Delete "DUH" questions that require a simple yes/no or an obvious answer.
- Make sure that some questions require personal reflection.
- Make sure that some questions require learners to read, search, and study the Bible.
- Make sure that some questions require learners to study a key word found in the passage.
- Make sure that some questions require learners to study one or more cross-reference.
- Make sure that some questions require learners to study the commentary.
- Are the questions clearly and briefly written?

4. Review the Leader Guide commentary highlighting the important sections.

- Use the commentary to further research answers to the personal Bible study questions developed in step 1.
- Answer any study questions printed in the commentary. Select and convert the best study questions into discussion questions for your teaching plan.
- What portions of the commentary seem critical to understanding the passage? Write questions that can lead to the discovery of these truths. Convert these questions into discussion questions so learners can discover these truths rather than just listening to the commentary paraphrased or read.
- Note the commentary points that cannot be discovered quickly. Minimize the number of these points. Develop ways to involve learners as you share these points in class. The teaching plan in your Leader Guide provides helpful suggestions on this. (See step 5.)
- Optional: Repeat this process for your supplemental commentaries such as The Herschel Hobbs Commentary, Advanced Bible Study, Explore the Bible Adult Study Guide, or the Explore the Bible Adult Commentary.
- Insert the commentary questions and notes into the relevant points in your discussion question sequence.

5. Review the Leader Guide and Leader Pack and select activities and discussion questions that will actively engage your class. Insert the selected activities and questions into the appropriate points between your discussion questions and commentary notes. Repeat the process if you use FBS Leader QuickSource.

6. Connect the lesson to your class members and the class mission.

- Read the Learner Guide. Convert the best study questions into discussion questions and insert them into your teaching plan.
- Insert into your teaching plan one or more Learner Guide activities. Use the Learner Guide as a tool to develop your member's personal Bible study skills and habits in and beyond the session.
- Consider the unique needs of your class members. Does the lesson especially speak to one or more class members? Plan how you will use this lesson to encourage or challenge these members. Also consider if one of your personal experiences illustrates a lesson truth. Appropriately insert these items into your lesson plan.
- If appropriate, connect the lesson to the class ministry in and beyond the session.

7. Compile your teaching plan on a Session Plan Sheet or create your own printout. You can create your own teaching plan printout using a computer and the Leader Pack's CD-ROM. Cut and paste your selected commentary, discussion questions, and activities onto a blank document. You might even color code the different elements of the document. When completed, these documents contain all you need to teach!