

ST. AUGUSTINE TAUGHT THE CATECHUMENS AND SO DO WE

by

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INTRODUCTION

“Take the lid off it. See where it can go.”¹ That’s what Duke basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski is fond of saying when studying game tape of his opponents—something he often does until four in the morning.² Just think about that. The winningest coach in Division I basketball, who recently claimed his fifth national title, still rewinds and fast-forwards game footage to find an opponent’s weakness to exploit, as if he’s a rookie coach hungry for his first national title. It’s no wonder Coach K. continues to be so successful.

I invite you to adopt Coach K.’s tenacity in figuring out how we can best reach adults with God’s Word in a Bible class setting.³ In order to do that, we’ll “rewind the tape” and look at how instructors from the past like Augustine taught adults. We’ll also “fast forward” to see what contemporary research tells us about teaching adults. And we’ll “slow down the tape” to analyze common teaching practices and habits in our circles. By the end of this paper, I hope I will have encouraged you to either keep doing what you’ve been doing, or to incorporate some new teaching techniques in your adult Bible classes. So, let’s take the lid off, and see where it can go.

PEDAGOGY & ANDRAGOGY

Do you prefer teaching children or adults? After you’ve introduced yourself to your neighbor, share your answer to that question along with an explanation. You have 90 seconds to do this. The clock starts now.

There’s been a lot of current research about teaching children (pedagogy), but not nearly as much about teaching adults (andragogy). That’s ironic when you consider how the great teachers of ancient times were teachers of *adults*, not children. Plato’s Academy and Aristotle’s Lyceum, for example, were adult education institutions. These teachers of old used dialogue, parables, and what we would call “problem-based learning activities” with adults. It was not until the monasteries in the seventh century established schools for children that the term “pedagogy” came into use.⁴

¹ C. L. Brown, “USA Basketball Helped Shape Duke Blue Devils’ Title Run,” April 7, 2015, (http://espn.go.com/blog/collegebasketballnation/post/_/id/106868/usa-basketball-helped-shape-duke-blue-devils-title-run), accessed May 1, 2015.

² Brown, “USA.”

³ This paper focuses on a normal Sunday morning/midweek adult Bible class setting rather than a small group setting, though many of the principles and techniques discussed in this paper would apply to both.

⁴ Sharan B. Merriam, Laura L. Bierema, ed. *Adult Learning Linking Theory and Practice* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014), 44.

Because of the modern emphasis on pedagogy, and our Lutheran emphasis on confirmation instruction, I felt more prepared to teach children than adults when I graduated from the seminary. Our synod has rightly invested much time and material into improving our teaching of children, but for many years we have perhaps assumed that the same efforts are unnecessary for adults. We may have falsely concluded that an adult's greater capacity for patience and attention means that we can relax our efforts to engage them as learners. That assumption is now being corrected by WELS Adult Discipleship with the workshops they've offered at various pastors' conferences. I'm also happy to see the new *Teach the Word* newsletter that Adult Discipleship is producing with Northwestern Publishing House and Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary. If you haven't received this free newsletter, be sure to sign up for it.⁵ It's a great resource for ideas and techniques on how to better teach adult Bible class.

Before we explore what is unique about teaching adults, let's "rewind the tape" to see what men like Augustine thought about education in general.

AUGUSTINE

Augustine (354-430 AD) was from Tagaste, North Africa, an area in modern-day Algeria. He dabbled in Manicheism before becoming a Christian at age 32. Ten years after his conversion, Augustine was ordained Bishop of Hippo.⁶ Augustine had always shown a keen interest in education; before his conversion he had even proposed a "program" for liberal arts training.⁷ This isn't to suggest that Augustine left us with a teaching manual. Gary McCloskey observed:

Only three of St. Augustine's works deal specifically with education. The first of these is *The Teacher (De Magistro)*, written in the year following his return to North Africa; it is the report of a dialogue with his son Adeodatus, who had recently died, and deals with the problem of communication between teacher and pupil. The second is *Christian Education (De Doctrina Christiana)*, the greater part of which was written the year after his consecration as bishop. The third is *The Instruction of the Uninstructed (De Catechizandis Rudibus)*, written about three years later. Of the last two, the former deals with the problem of Christian curriculum, the latter with the principles of teaching to be observed by the Christian teacher when he instructs those who come to seek an

⁵ You can sign up for the free *Teach the Word* newsletter at <http://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin?v=001YkmmIsds1mou-QYeIKzdqgulj42BT3D> If that link doesn't work, contact NPH directly.

⁶ "Augustine" (<http://ancienthistory.about.com/cs/earlychurch/p/staugustine.htm>), accessed June 20, 2015.

⁷ Raymond Canning, *Teaching and Learning: An Augustinian Perspective*, (http://aejt.com.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/395647/AEJT_3.4_Canning.pdf), 1, accessed April 4, 2015.

understanding of the faith. Apart from these treatises, the reader must roam widely over St. Augustine's writings to receive additional insight into his educational theory.⁸

So what can we learn from Augustine? I think one important truth is the *purpose* of education. To Augustine, education meant "...moving the minds of the listeners, not [simply] that they may know what is to be done, but that they may *do* what they already know should be done."⁹ Augustine's emphasis on the practical echoes the philosophy of Clement of Alexandria, who lived well over a century prior to Augustine (c. 150 – c. 215 AD). Clement wrote, "The Instructor being practical, not theoretical, his aim is thus to improve the soul...and to train it up to a virtuous, not to an intellectual life."¹⁰

THE PURPOSE OF BIBLE STUDY

Augustine and Clement's ancient advice is a good reminder for us all. The purpose of any Bible class is *not* to make spiritual smarty-pants out of God's people so they can answer all the questions in Bible Trivial Pursuit. No, we want God's people to know God's Word, to believe it, *and* to put it into practice. What did Jesus say? "...everyone who hears these words of mine *and puts them into practice* is like a wise man who built his house on the rock" (Matthew 7:24 NIV '11). The well-known evangelist and publisher Dwight L. Moody (1837-1899) observed: "The Bible wasn't given for our information but for our transformation."¹¹ Christian authors Rick and Shera Melick even made up a word when they wrote: "The goal [of Bible study] is *transformational* learning: learning that acts."¹²

Of course I don't want to give the impression that our Bible studies should be a series of "How To" lessons ("How to Have A Successful Marriage"; "How to Budget Wisely"; etc.). Our lessons will clearly teach God's law so that we are convicted of sin. Our lessons will also firmly center on Jesus and what he has done to win forgiveness. So yes, we will want to help our students grow in the *knowledge* of our Savior (cf. 2 Peter 3:17, 18).¹³ But God has also promised

⁸ Gary N. McCloskey, "Encounters of Learning: Saint Augustine on Education," Presented at the 10th Annual Augustinian Week, St. Augustine – Pilgrim on the Way to Truth, Prague, Czech Republic, (April, 2008): 1.

⁹ Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, 4.12.27. Italics added.

¹⁰ Clement of Alexandria, *Paedagogus*, Chapter 1, (<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/clement-instructor-book1.html>), accessed May 30, 2015.

¹¹ Bruce Wilkinson, *The Seven Laws of the Learner* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Books, 1992), 146.

¹² Rick and Shera Melick, *Teaching that Transforms* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 186.

¹³ 2 Peter 3:17, 18a "Therefore, dear friends, since you already know this, be on your guard so that you may not be carried away by the error of lawless men and fall from your secure position. ¹⁸ But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (NIV '84)

that Holy Spirit-worked faith in Jesus does lead to change and action in a repentant sinner's life (cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:3).¹⁴ This change and action is something we will want to *intentionally* encourage when teaching.

PICK A TARGET

Since our students must first *know* God's Word before they will be empowered to act, we will want to teach with clarity and with purpose. Our confirmation instruction training can be put to good use here. We were taught that every lesson should have an "aim" that is stated clearly after the introduction. The aim is your target. Once you've established this target, you'll be less likely to make your students run all over the field trying to catch your arrows, because all the components of your lesson will drive toward the stated goal or aim.¹⁵

Some educators insist that the stated aim of your lesson should be specific and the achievement of its goal measurable. They say you can achieve this by using "strong" verbs¹⁶ when articulating the aim of the lesson. Paul Nitz, WELS missionary and professor at the Lutheran Bible Institute of Malawi, observed:

The great value of a strong verb is that the learners can feel as if they have accomplished something. For example, if I have *discussed* the Third Commandment in class, I may or may not have accomplished much learning. But if I have *diagrammed* the meaning of the Third Commandment, I am much more likely...able to say with conviction, "I learned it!"¹⁷

I admit that my lesson objectives are not usually stated in a way that are as specific and measurable as the example above. Sometimes such goals can feel too "academic" for a Sunday morning adult Bible class. Still, you should have a clear purpose for your lesson. To help clarify your lesson objective you could fill in these blanks: "By the end of this lesson I want the participants to KNOW _____, to FEEL _____, and to DO _____."

For a lesson on Romans 6, you could fill in the blanks like this: "I want the participants to KNOW the importance of their baptism, and to (FEEL) rejoice that they are baptized, and to

¹⁴ 1 Thessalonians 1:3 "We continually remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ." (NIV '84)

¹⁵ Rick and Shera Melick, *Teaching that Transforms* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 209.

¹⁶ See APPENDIX A for examples of "strong" verbs to use when writing lesson objectives. Although the list is long, be sure to read through it and circle some "strong" verbs you'd like to use when developing future Bible studies.

¹⁷ Paul D. Nitz "A Practical Overview of Dialogue Education" paper supplied via email (Revised May 2014): 11.

(DO) adopt at least one practice that will help them remember their baptism daily.” Do you *have* to fill in those three blanks to ensure a focused lesson? Of course not. But do at least think through them. It will help sharpen your lesson’s focus even if you only fill in one or two of the blanks.

CURRENT ANDROGOGY: PRACTICE MAKES A PATTERN

We might be pretty good at figuring out what we want our learners to know and feel about any particular section of Scripture, but do we consistently give them the opportunity to put that knowledge into practice?

The importance of giving adult students the opportunity to *apply* what they have learned is one of the assumptions of current andragogy. It was Malcom Knowles (1913-1997) who popularized the term “andragogy” and defined it as “the art and science of helping adults learn.”¹⁸ Knowles observed that as people mature, their self-concept moves from one of dependency toward that of a self-directed human being.¹⁹ He concluded that adults do not learn “subjects;” they learn in order to complete tasks or solve problems that they encounter in their daily lives.²⁰

If we agree that adults learn in order to solve problems, then it seems reasonable to not only *teach* them biblical principles, to not only convince them that the principle will *benefit* them, but to also give them a chance to *practice* the principle before they head back to work on Monday. When we do this, we are building familiarity and excitement in our students for the truth they have learned. As the poet W. B. Yeats (1865-1939) once said, “Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.”²¹

Consider again the lesson on Romans 6. We might be content to awaken in our class the desire to remember their baptism on a daily basis, but wouldn’t it be wonderful to also give them time to figure out how they could put that desire into practice?

¹⁸ Jim Gould, *Achieving QTLS Learning Theory and Classroom Practice in the Lifelong Learning Sector, 2nd Edition* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012), 94-95.

¹⁹ Malcom Knowles’ other andragogy principles are listed under APPENDIX C.

²⁰ Jim Gould, *Achieving QTLS Learning Theory and Classroom Practice in the Lifelong Learning Sector, 2nd Edition* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012), 94-95.

²¹ Jim Gould, *Achieving*, 137.

Below are some examples of opportunities I gave my class to practice the truths they learned in a study on Colossians. Read the examples on your own. Then circle the learning task that would most interest you, if you were a student in the class. Don't actually work on the task, just circle it, and then glance at your neighbor's sheet to see which task he circled. You have 2 minutes. The clock starts now.

1. Paul wrote that God rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13). If your unchurched friend asks what that means, how would *you* explain it? Jot down a response and share it with your neighbor.

2. In Colossians 1:23 and 28, Paul tells his listeners that he is working hard to ground them in the Word so that they will remain faithful to the end. Pick *one* of the following activities to help ground yourself further in the verses we've studied today, so that your faith in Jesus may grow even stronger.
 - a) Compose a "rap" or figure out actions to help your family commit Colossians 1:16, 17 to memory.
 - b) Work the truths of Colossians 1:18 into a motto that would fit on a t-shirt for a church youth event.
 - c) Your pastor has had a difficult few months of ministry. Compose an email to encourage him, using the thoughts of Colossians 1:28, 29 as a guide.
 - d) Write a Facebook profile page for Jesus or for the Apostle Paul based on Colossians 1:15-29.
 - e) Colossians 1:15-29 speaks about how our salvation depends on Christ alone. Use the words and the concepts you find there to create an additional verse to the hymn *In Christ Alone*.

3. Pick one of the following scenarios and use the section you just read (Colossians 3:18-4:1) to prepare to role-play the scenario with the instructor.
 - a) You want to give direction to your grandchild and her fiancé on their God-given roles in marriage. Help them understand these key concepts: submission and love. (Also consult Ephesians 5:22-33.)
 - b) A family comes to you for counselling. The child thinks that the dad is overbearing. The dad is fed up with his child's stubbornness. (Also consult Ephesians 6:1-4.)
 - c) Your teenager is about to begin his first job. What encouragement and advice do you give him?

Did your neighbor circle the same learning task as you? I doubt if everyone in the room chose the same task, because we all have different interests. One of these learning tasks brought out the hidden poet in one of my Bible class students, who composed a great verse for *In Christ Alone* and was happy to share it out loud. Others in class who were too shy to answer questions were more than happy to design a t-shirt logo. *You* might not be a poet or an artist, but others are...so don't hesitate to include learning tasks that wouldn't necessarily interest you. Educator Tom Sappington wrote: "In good learning, we set the table well, with succulent, nutritious, and visually delightful morsels. Then we let the learners select, taste, and digest [learning tasks] for themselves."²² We'll talk more about learning tasks later in this paper.²³

TAKE YOUR TIME

With the examples I shared from the Colossians Bible study, I may have given the impression that I always provide my students with specific opportunities to put their learning into practice. Unfortunately, that's not true. The major reason for this is because practicing takes time, and I only have a 45-minute Sunday Bible class. I sometimes end up teaching like the computer tech who shows you how to fix your networking problems with a dizzying array of clicks, but never gives you the opportunity to troubleshoot the problem on your own while he coaches you through the steps.

If we rewind the tape back to Augustine, we will see that he has some good advice for teachers with lots of material and limited time: don't talk faster—cover less. Augustine wrote,

This does not imply...that we ought to repeat by memory the entire Pentateuch...and the entire Gospel and Acts of the Apostles...or that we should put all the matters which are contained in these volumes into our own words... For neither does the time admit for that, nor does any necessity demand it. But what we ought to do is...[select] certain of the more wonderful facts...that, instead of exhibiting them to view only in their wrappings...and then instantly snatching them from our sight, we ought to dwell on them for a certain space, and thus, as it were, unfold them and open them out to vision, and present them to the minds of the hearers as things to be examined and admired.²⁴

²² Jane Vella, *On Teaching and Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 105.

²³ For more learning activity ideas, check out APPENDIX B.

²⁴ Augustine, *De Catechizandis Rudibus* (translated by S. D. F. Salmond, www.logoslibrary.org/augustine/uninstructed/), chapter 3, accessed May 4, 2015.

SAY NO TO PRE-CHEW CHARLIE

Part of the reason I tend to rush through my material is because I've already grappled with the text and am eager to share what I've learned with the class. The easiest way to do this is simply to lecture. "Tell them what you're going to tell them. Tell them. Tell them what you have told them." That's more or less the mantra of educator David Ausubel (1918–2008).²⁵

In contrast, Jerome Bruner (b. 1915) believes that when learners are presented with information in a highly structured manner, they become overly-dependent on their teacher. He feels that learners should be encouraged to discover information and mold it into relationships for themselves. This, he believes, will allow learners to remember the information longer and will also increase their ability to apply the new knowledge to real-life situations.²⁶ A Chinese proverb states succinctly: "What I hear I forget. What I see I remember. What I do I understand."²⁷

Shouldn't this be our goal as Bible teachers—to help our students experience the joy of digging through God's Word and discovering the truths for themselves? A 2003 study by Sarah Gravett found that when a lecturer delivers his lesson, he actually gets a physical "high" from lecturing.²⁸ What a shame if our personal high experienced at the Bible class podium leaves everyone else in the role of static spectator. It would be better by far if an instructor shared his energy by designing appropriate learning tasks for the students—tasks that allowed them to share the learning-induced "high"; tasks that caused synapses to fire in many brains, not just one.

This point was illustrated in a memorable way by Pastor Michael Quandt at a 2013 Summer Quarter course he led on adult Bible class, when he was still professor of education here at the seminary. Pastor Quandt said that simply *telling* your class everything you learned in the course of your preparation is behaving like the character from *Saturday Night Live* called "Pre-chew Charlie." Pre-chew Charlie owned a restaurant in which his waiters specialized in "softening up" steaks and other foods for restaurant goers. Take a look at this video clip.²⁹

²⁵ Jim Gould, *Achieving QTLS Learning Theory and Classroom Practice in the Lifelong Learning Sector, 2nd Edition* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012), 49.

²⁶ Gould, *Achieving*, 50.

²⁷ Gould, *Achieving*, 154.

²⁸ Jane Vella and Associates, *Dialogue Education at Work* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 316.

²⁹ Here's the link for the "Pre-chew Charlie" video: http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xas2fz_saturday-night-live-pre-chew-charli_fun

Humorous...but not too appetizing! However, we do much the same thing when we simply regurgitate everything we know by lecturing. If our goal is to train life-long Bible students, then we need to give our students the opportunity to chomp into God's Word on their own. Here are some examples of how I've tried to do that:

1. Identify the "boastful horn" (Daniel 7:15-28) by answering these questions:
 - a) Where does he come from? (vs. 19, 20)
 - b) Who are his targets? (v. 21)
 - c) How does he fight? (vs. 20, 25)
 - d) How long will he last? (vs. 21, 22, 25-28)

(Every other Bible study I referenced on this section of Daniel simply told what the "boastful horn" represented (the antichrist). Why not give your students time to figure that out on their own? Then they will walk away from the class confident of the identification of the boastful horn—not because you, the class authority said so—but because the authority of God's Word declares it!)

2. Daniel probably slept better in the lions' den than the king did in his royal bedroom! Why? Because Daniel knew that even though the king's hands were tied by his decree, God's hands were not. (John Jeske, Daniel People's Bible) Search the book of Psalms to find verses that would have reminded Daniel of this truth. Do this by looking up psalms that correspond with the month, day, and year you were born. (e.g. March 4, '76 birthday = Psalm 3, 4, and 76)

(I want to thank Professor Charles Cortright for modelling this technique in a Bible study he presented to the Rocky Mountain Conference a few years back. You obviously don't have time to read through all 150 Psalms, but if you match the psalms to something personal to the students, like their birth date, then the psalm itself becomes personal. This exercise proved to be a hit with both the adults and youth who sat in on this particular class.)

3. Daniel 7 takes place about a decade *before* the events of Daniel 5 (the writing on the wall), and Daniel 6 (the lions' den). Why does the book of Daniel go back in time at this point? Compare the chapter and section headings of Daniel 1-6 with the chapter and section headings of Daniel 7-12. How are the two sections of Daniel different?

(So often we simply give the outline of a book. At times, that's fine—determining an outline of a Bible book can be a complex undertaking. But when possible, I think it's good for the class to figure out the outline on their own. This can help them understand why a particular book of the Bible is arranged the way it is. This in turn helps them marvel at the beauty of God's Word on another level. The Bible isn't just a bunch of true stories thrown together, like a fifth-grader's journal entries. Thought went into arranging them, and there must be a reason for that.)

Hopefully my sample questions illustrate the principles espoused by Augustine when he wrote in *De Magistro* (The Teacher):

*What father sends a child to school with the silly aim of finding out what the teacher's understanding is?*³⁰ Rather, when all subjects, even those concerning virtue and wisdom, have been expounded by those who profess them, then students, if they are really to be called that, investigate within themselves whether what they are hearing is true, strenuously putting it to the test of their own interior truth. That is the point at which they learn.³¹

PREPARATION, NOT PERFORMANCE

Educator Jane Vella (b. 1931), whose teaching techniques I will speak of more later, once quipped: “Teaching can get in the way of learning.”³² Our purpose as educators, and especially as Bible study leaders, is not to cause our students to marvel at how much we know. We want our students to rejoice at how much *they learned* in class. And here’s the good news: you don’t have to be a brilliant classroom performer to be a good Bible study teacher, as Christian authors James Wilhoit and Leland Ryken point out:

Teachers would do well to remember the words of William Carey (1761-1834), the pioneer [British Baptist] missionary to India. Carey’s missionary career was astoundingly successful, yet he described himself as a “plodder.” Most good Bible teachers are plodders. They edify their students, not through brilliant lessons (which may, however, occasionally be achieved), but by serving healthy words, week in and week out, through thoughtful study of the Bible.

Living in a culture of personality cults and superheroes, we have mistakenly been led to judge effective teachers by an impossibly high standard of dazzling classroom performance. . . We should discard our image of the teacher as a charismatic performer who overwhelms a class with sheer forcefulness of personality and replace it with the image of the teacher as *facilitator* of class learning.³³

In that regard, Cyril of Jerusalem (315-387 AD) is perhaps *not* to be emulated. Let’s rewind the tape and picture the scene Edward Yarnold describes from fourth century AD Jerusalem, where Cyril presided as bishop:

³⁰ I italicized that first sentence because it’s my favorite Augustine quote on education and a truth I want to remember. Bible students don’t come to class to see what I know, they come to learn what God says.

³¹ Augustine, quoted in *Teaching and Learning: An Augustinian Perspective* by Raymond Canning, (http://aejt.com.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0007/395647/AEJT_3.4_Canning.pdf), 2, accessed May 1, 2015.

³² Jane Vella, *On Teaching and Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), xxiii.

³³ James C. Wilhoit and Leland Ryken, *Effective Bible Teaching*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 52. Italics added.

Finally at the Easter Vigil after prolonged prayers, [the catechumens] are led into a corner, where a voice comes out of the darkness commanding them one by one to turn on the devil, point at him, and reject him to his face, then to turn to Christ and swear allegiance to him; they remain only half comprehending as they find themselves stripped, anointed from head to toe, pushed three times under the water; then, after fragrant oil has been poured on their heads, they are dressed in white and led to the tomb of the risen Lord, then into the Martyrium, the church which is the witness to the Passion, where they are greeted with joy and...[receive] for the first time the bread and wine over which have been said the Lord's words: "This is my body...my blood"...*all without any explanation*.³⁴

The catechumens of old generally received three years of instruction before they were allowed to receive Holy Communion, but, depending on who their teacher was, many didn't actually learn about the sacrament until *after* they had received it for the first time!³⁵ Cyril's reasoning for this practice was as follows. "I saw clearly that seeing is much more convincing than hearing. Only now are they able to understand the more divine mysteries." (*Mystagogic Catecheses* 1.1)³⁶

Yarnold felt that Cyril's Easter Vigil baptismal ceremony was designed to elicit the same sense of religious awe that had been a feature of the Greek and Roman mystery-religions. According to Yarnold, the very word "awe-inspiring," *phrikodes* (literally "causing a shiver" or "making their hair stand on end"), had formed part of the vocabulary of the pagan mysteries.³⁷ Cyril and others seemed to adopt Aristotle's view that "...those undergoing initiation are not expected to gain knowledge (*mathein*) but an experience (*pathein*) and a disposition."³⁸

Cyril may have come up with an emotionally-charged and tactile "lesson plan" on Holy Communion, but even the most spine-tingling teaching performance is of no value if it doesn't clearly expound God's Word. It is the *gospel*, the Apostle Paul says, and not my performance as a teacher, that is the power of God for salvation (Romans 1:16). The question then that every Bible teacher should ask is, "How can I best help my students learn the gospel?" The answer is quite simple: *intentionally involve them in the discovery process!* Let's keep figuring out how we can do that.

³⁴ Edward Yarnold, *Cyril of Jerusalem* (London: Routledge, 2000), 53-54. Italics added.

³⁵ Yarnold, *Cyril*, 50.

³⁶ Yarnold, *Cyril*, 50.

³⁷ Yarnold, *Cyril*, 52.

³⁸ Yarnold, *Cyril*, 53.

ACTIVE LECTURING

So far I may have given the impression that lecturing is a poor teaching technique. It isn't if we break up the lecturing with learning tasks. Lecturing is an efficient way to share new information with students. But even when lecturing, we can keep our students engaged in the learning process. One obvious way is to provide an outline for note-taking. However, I've seen student handouts where all the transitions and pertinent points are written out in full. Here's the thing: some students will just read ahead and then zone out, waiting for the instructor to catch up. Why not provide the same information with _____ here and there, so that _____ have to stay with you as you _____?³⁹

DIALOGIC LEARNING

A contemporary learning theory called "Dialogic Learning" supports the idea that teaching adults through lecture alone is an approach that limps. Professor Tom Kock of the seminary provided this clear explanation of the theory:

"Dialogic Learning" simply means "learning through dialogue." The idea is that the learners are given some problem to wrestle with and (perhaps) are given some tools... to answer the problem. Or, they pool their collective understandings together to discover answers to problems. This technique utilizes the teacher as more of a "guide on the side" rather than a "sage on the stage."⁴⁰

One current proponent of this approach is Jane Vella. What impresses me about Vella is that she has applied the dialogic learning approach in all kinds of situations, all around the world (universities, community colleges, seminaries, hospitals, refugee camps, relief organizations, etc.). While her ultimate aim is to obtain world peace through dialogue, which we know of course is not possible, Vella's broad use of this educational approach leads me to believe that dialogic learning can be adapted for Bible class in *any* WELS church.

Having a dialogue rather than a monologue was an approach that Augustine espoused as well. Gary McCloskey writes:

[Augustine's] emphasis on the importance of community as a means of learning distinguishes his pedagogy from some others. In Ignatian (Jesuit) pedagogy the emphasis is on learning to be a "man for others." But, in Augustinian pedagogy learning "with"

³⁹ The blanks should be filled in as follows: "blanks"; "students"; "lecture."

⁴⁰ Thomas Kock, October, 2014 email to author.

others is a primary concern. Learning with others can be seen in Saint Augustine's emphasis on dialogue as the best way to learn.^{41 42}

DIALOGIC LEARNING IN ACTION

Since dialogic learning works through dialogue, that means the instructor will need to ask questions that promote discussion. You'll want to steer your ship and passengers away from the shallow waters of *closed* questions where you're likely to be grounded and end any possibility of a journey. That's because *closed* questions invite a short, focused answer (often yes or no), while *open* questions invite the respondent to reflect and to draw comparisons. Nitz offers this example of an open question in place of a closed question:

Instead of asking, "What are the Ten Commandments?" ask "Which of the Ten Commandments does your group feel is most difficult for our Lutheran members to follow?" The open question allows for more reflective thinking and will lead to a discussion.⁴³

Here's another example of an open question:

In Colossians 3:8-15, Paul lists some characteristics that Christians should take off and others we should put on. How are these characteristics related?⁴⁴

Notice how the instructor did not ask, "What are the characteristics we should take off? What are the characteristics we should put on?" These are questions anyone can answer if they can read the biblical text, and therefore rarely does anyone answer such questions willingly.

If you need to establish a base of knowledge before you get to the application question, have your students work on those closed questions on their own. This is how the previous question would look with that approach:

In Colossians 3:8-15, Paul lists some characteristics that Christians should take off and others we should put on. What are they? Take 90 seconds on your own to list them. Then

⁴¹ Gary N. McCloskey, "Encounters of Learning: Saint Augustine on Education," Presented at the 10th Annual Augustinian Week, St. Augustine – Pilgrim on the Way to Truth, Prague, Czech Republic, (April 2008): 8.

⁴² Augustine knew that he could learn something from his students. Veteran teachers today know this to be true as well. How often hasn't one of your students had an insight into a passage you hadn't thought of before, or made an application that you really appreciated? When you experience those moments, don't just say, "That's a good point." Take the time to write the point down in your notes while the class watches. The message you'll send is, "We're all students of God's Word here, and I value your input."

⁴³ Paul D. Nitz "A Practical Overview of Dialogue Education" paper supplied via email (Revised May 2014): 8.

⁴⁴ William R. Yount, ed., *The Teaching Ministry of the Church, 2nd Edition* (Nashville: Academic, 2008), 247.

take another 90 seconds to think of how these characteristics are related, and share your thoughts with a neighbor.

Now it's your turn. Below is a closed question. Turn it into an open question which would promote discussion around the main point of the verses. You have 3 minutes to write your question and to share it with a neighbor. Start now.

CLOSED QUESTION

What did Paul ask his readers to do in Colossians 4:2, 3?

“Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains” (Colossians 4:2, 3 NIV ‘84).

YOUR OPEN QUESTION

MY EXAMPLE

What do the following *italicized* words and phrases from Colossians 4:2, 3 teach us about prayer? Take five minutes to jot down thoughts that come to mind.

“*Devote* yourselves to prayer, being *watchful* and *thankful*.³ And pray for us, too, *that God may open a door for our message*, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains” (Colossians 4:2, 3).

- devote
- watchful
- thankful
- that God may open a door for our message

Open questions not only promote discussion, they get to the heart of the matter. Vella explains, “The open question does not belittle facts and figures; it simply moves directly to examine them, to analyze the connections, and to consider the implications.”⁴⁵ So while it’s good to know that Paul urged his readers to devote themselves to prayer while being watchful and thankful, wouldn’t we ultimately want our students to know *why* Paul would urge this? And *how* exactly does one devote himself to prayer while being “watchful” anyway? If your class can wrestle with and answer those questions, they will walk away from the lesson having learned something valuable for their own prayer life.

Q & A BASICS

Independent Work Time

You may have noticed how I like to give students time to work on the questions by themselves. The introverts in your class will appreciate this! Just because learners don’t offer answers and opinions in class doesn’t mean they don’t have them. Allowing time for independent reflection also takes away the tendency of a group to sit back and rely on the class genius to answer all the questions. Even if learners don’t know the answer, they are more likely to try to think of an answer if everyone is quietly working on the question.

“Clean” Questions

Do you ever find yourself asking a question and then immediately rephrasing it? (e.g. “Why did Jesus die on the cross...what was the purpose...what difference does his death make

⁴⁵ Jane Vella, *On Teaching and Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 113.

to you?") In essence, you've just asked three questions. Which one do you want your students to answer? Keep the questions "clean" by asking one per concept.

Wait Time

"Wait time" is important when teaching children, and it's just as important when teaching adults. After asking a clear question, wait at least six seconds before calling on anyone. If you don't do this, you'll end up calling on the "quick shooters" again and again, and everyone else will mentally check out. If you have to, study your shoes for a while after you ask your question, or check your notes for spelling mistakes, or take a slow sip of that yummy church coffee. This is such a simple technique to incorporate, and you'll find a lot more people participating if you give the appropriate wait time.⁴⁶

Encourage Multiple Responses

Even after someone has offered an answer, you don't need to affirm or correct it immediately. This is especially helpful with "Evaluate" or "Agree/Disagree" type questions. If you remain non-committal after the first person has offered an opinion, only acknowledging them with a nod and smile before looking around the room, you will invite others to join in with their thoughts (right, Professor Brenner?). If you don't like the idea of silence, you can try these conversation prompts:⁴⁷

"What did you say, Melanie? Hmm, interesting—why do you think that?"
"Good. Can you say what your reasoning is?"

Or transfer responsibility away from you to the class:
"Mmm-hmm. What is John getting at?"

And balance students' voices:
"Others we've heard from less?"
"If it's already been said, how would you say it?"
"Whose opinion on this topic would you like to hear?"

THE IMPORTANCE OF INTRODUCTIONS

Clement of Alexandria compared successful catechesis to a game of catch. The game relies not just on the skill of the thrower, but also on the readiness of the catcher to join the

⁴⁶ Ask someone in your class to count your wait time after questions. This is one sure way for you to consciously start practicing this technique of waiting after you ask a question.

⁴⁷ Roben Torosyan, "Reminders for Improving Classroom Discussion," *The Teaching Professor* November 2006, 3, (<http://digitalcommons.fairfield.edu/>), accessed November 4, 2014.

rhythm of the game.⁴⁸ How ready are your adult learners to join the rhythm of the game when they come to your Sunday morning Bible class? You've worked hard on your Bible study all week and are eager to share God's Word with them. *You* are focused and ready to go, but your students are still thinking about the guy who cut them off on the way to church, or wondering what exactly is in Coffee-mate creamer, anyway?⁴⁹ Their minds are miles away from your lesson on Daniel in the lions' den. Based on his research regarding dialogic learning, Nitz observed: "If I scatter seed over a field, some plants may germinate. But, the rate of germination is much...better if I prepare the ground before I scatter the seed."⁵⁰

How well do you prepare the ground at the start of your Bible classes? All too often I think our lessons start like this:

OK, I still see a few people grabbing coffee. We'll wait for them. (Small talk ensues for five minutes, frustrating those who are seated, ready to go.⁵¹) Alright, we should get started. Last week we learned about Daniel in the lions' den. Today we'll learn about a vision Daniel received. Open your Bibles to Daniel 7...

According to Knowles, adult learners need to be made aware of why what they are studying is important for their daily lives.⁵² We work hard in our sermons to draw in the audience with a good introduction, so why not do the same with our Bible classes?

I used to think I was doing a fairly good job of this, but my introductions were usually of the sermon-variety: I would do the speaking while my students sat passively listening. Dialogic learning proponents say that no lesson should start without a *task* by the students. An introductory task not only serves to warm up their brains, like an athlete warming up for a competition, it is also a way to signal to the class that this will be a lesson in which the teacher doesn't do all the talking—he is interested in what the students think and feel.⁵³

⁴⁸ Paul Turner, *The Hallelujah Highway A History of the Catechumenate* (Stevens Point, WI: Liturgy Training Publications, 2000), 24.

⁴⁹ Sugar, water, partially hydrogenated oil, sodium caseinate, propylene glycol, dipotassium phosphate, polysorbate 60, sucralose. Ick.

⁵⁰ Paul D. Nitz "A Practical Overview of Dialogue Education" paper supplied via email (Revised May 2014): 9.

⁵¹ If you have trouble starting class on time, try using a "countdown clock." I've used PowerPoint to make three-minute long Bible quizzes for this purpose and begin the class *immediately* after the three minutes are up. I've also had to remind my congregation from time to time the importance of the Bible study introduction, as it sets the aim for that day's class. When I've given them this gentle reminder, they've all come to class on time.

⁵² Jim Gould, *Achieving QTLS Learning Theory and Classroom Practice in the Lifelong Learning Sector, 2nd Edition* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012), 107.

⁵³ Paul D. Nitz "A Practical Overview of Dialogue Education" paper supplied via email (Revised May 2014): 9.

Compare the following two introductions from a lesson on Colossians 1:15-20:

Intro #1

One planned on making his horse a senator (Caligula). Another loved to sing but was so bad at it that he had to post guards to keep people from leaving the room when he performed (Nero). And still another (Commodus) dressed in a lion skin and carried a club because he fancied himself Hercules, the supposed strong-man and mortal son of Zeus. The emperors of Rome, like kings from every age and nation, could be downright silly. Many of our leaders today are also disappointments. But even if our mayor is a Caligula, our premier⁵⁴ a Nero, and our prime minister a Commodus, it wouldn't matter, because Christ, our savior, is king supreme! He rules over all creation on behalf of all those bound for salvation. Let's find out how this reality is an everyday comfort for us.

Intro #2

One planned on making his horse a senator... (etc.)

Why are rulers often like this? Let's list five characteristics of rulers that can make them disappointing leaders. (Accept ideas from the class. Then continue with the introduction.)

I submitted the first introduction as part of my 2013 Summer Quarter course work and was quite pleased with it. But the instructor suggested adding a learning task. Sure, I grumbled a bit, but I'm glad he insisted. Since then I have strived to start every adult Bible class with a learning task, because I think it really does draw in the students better.

For my next example, I will treat you as my Bible class. Normally I would do this task as a brainstorming session with the whole class, but due to the size of our assembly here, I'll invite you to work with a neighbor or two. Please watch the projector screen even though the text of my introduction is below:

List 10 memorable meals from the Bible. You have 60 seconds. Go. (The introduction continues below after the brainstorming session is done.)

Did you realize that there were so many memorable meals in the Bible? Today we're going to take a closer look at one meal in particular. We'll call it the "Dinner of Doom." This Dinner of Doom will warn us away from sinful attitudes that would disqualify us from the most important meal of all—the wedding banquet of the Lamb.

The bonus of having a clear introduction is that you can return to it at the conclusion. After all, your introduction should be an arrow aimed at the heart of your lesson. Here's the conclusion to that lesson on Daniel 5. I'll include the text below, but in order to experience it as my Bible class would, please follow along on the screen.

⁵⁴ The governor of a Canadian province. But you all knew that, right?

There are a lot of notable meals in the Bible. But there is only one banquet worth being part of—the wedding supper of the Lamb. Belshazzar’s Dinner of Doom should serve as a warning for us not to throw away our invitation to this wonderful and everlasting banquet! Indeed, Jesus reminds us in Revelation 2 that only those who overcome will enjoy this banquet. So don’t become arrogant like Belshazzar and think that you can get along without God. You can’t. We all need God and his Word to sustain us in the faith.

Turn to APPENDIX B on p. 30. I want you to read on your own the four types of learning tasks described there. Then concentrate on the first learning task, the “Inductive” task. Apply the concepts described there to design an introductory learning task for a Bible study you recently taught or observed. When you’re done, share your example with a neighbor. You have 8 minutes for this task. Begin now.

IDEAS FOR REVIEWING

Just as I think we can work on improving our introductions, I believe we can also work on refining our review sessions. All too often I hear instructors say something like, “OK, before we get started on our material today, I want to do a quick review...” The instructor then proceeds to lecture, talking faster than the listeners are able to follow. The impression that can be given is that the review really isn’t that important—it’s throw-away material.

If you want to refine your review of the previous lesson, why not incorporate a learning activity? Here are some examples:

Last week we studied Colossians 1:1-14. Re-read those verses and write two questions: one about the background of Colossians, and the other about the basic content of the first fourteen verses. (Then we’ll see how well our councilmen can answer your questions!)

(I felt it was imperative that the class review Colossians 1:1-14 because it set the tone for the rest of the book. This activity also allowed students who had missed the first lesson to read the first fourteen verses on their own in a thoughtful way.)

Leaders can ask the class to fill in the blanks as another way to conduct an active review:

To review what we learned in our last class (Daniel 9:1-24), fill in the blanks.

Daniel 9 takes place during the first year of King Darius (Cyrus?). Daniel had probably just survived the _____ and was about _____ years old. After reading from the prophet _____, Daniel realized that _____ was about to end...⁵⁵

⁵⁵ The blanks should be filled in like this: “lions’ den”; “80”; “Jeremiah”; “the Babylonian exile.”

(Since we had already gone over these points several times in the course of our Daniel Bible study, I was confident that the students would be able to fill in most of the blanks on their own.)

MULTIPLE MODALITIES OF LEARNING

“If pastors and Bible teachers want to maximize learning for...all of the students in a class, they must incorporate multiple modalities of learning in teaching practice.”⁵⁶ You remember this point from your education classes, right? Educators usually speak of four modalities, or learning styles: visual (seeing), auditory (hearing), kinesthetic (moving), and tactile (touching).⁵⁷ The more styles you can incorporate into a lesson, the better. This theory has long held true in kindergarten classrooms; it’s just as important for every age of learner. The challenge for educators is to use all four modalities when they teach, rather than just their personal learning style. If we’re content to be lectured to, for example, then that is what we will most often do as teachers. But don’t forget about those adult students like Doug, one of my members. Doug is a heavy-duty mechanic and an amateur artist, who freely admits he learns by “doing.” How can you reach the “Dougs” in your class? Here are some ideas.

Thanks to technology, it’s pretty easy to incorporate the visual into our classrooms. With PowerPoint-type software we can share maps and pictures with our students. But *please* use high definition pictures and a font-size and color-scheme that won’t cause temporary blindness! Your font size should not be smaller than 36-point, except for captions. Every picture should have a purpose—illustrating a truth, for example. Cut back on the use of animations: use them only to draw attention to an important point. For that reason I would encourage you to reject all “random animation” and “random slide transition” features.

I love to use PowerPoint when I have the time to craft good presentations. PowerPoint helps me organize my thoughts and keeps me on track. I think it’s also helpful to my students, because they know exactly where we’re at on the worksheet. It also serves as a kind of closed caption service for those who are hard of hearing and who may not have caught the answer that was just given to a particular question. I’m happy to share the PowerPoints I have developed for various Bible studies, provided you overlook my early attempts to use this technology!

⁵⁶ Rick and Shera Melick, *Teaching that Transforms* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 177.

⁵⁷ S.D. Powell, “Learning Modalities” (<http://www.education.com/reference/article/learning-modalities/>), July 24, 2013, accessed March 18, 2015.

Of course using PowerPoint does not automatically deliver a good learning experience. Vella correctly observes that

Teaching...is more than presenting [a lesson] in...PowerPoint; it is organising sets of content in a reasonable and well-sequenced manner, shaping it into learning tasks that are accessible and challenging to adult learners so that their experience of learning is meaningful to them.⁵⁸

Even if you don't love PowerPoint, you will still want to find a way to provide your class with visuals. You could include maps and pictures on your student handout, or draw them on a white board. Bible study is so much richer with those kind of resources.

How can we reach the kinesthetic and tactile learners in our classrooms? One way is to give your class the opportunity to draw. Here are a couple of examples I created with Doug (my member) in mind:

1. Draw a four-panel comic story to illustrate King Nebuchadnezzar's real-life dream from Daniel 4:1-18. Then label your comic story with the meaning of Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

(Look at the screen for how this question might look using a PowerPoint slide.)

2. Preachers sometimes describe the attributes in Colossians 3:12-14 as "God's wedding clothes." But unlike normal wedding clothes, which are more for show and only used on one occasion, God's clothes are "work" clothes. Pick *one* of the following words and write a definition for it. Then draw a picture to illustrate the word in action.

compassion –

kindness –

humility –

gentleness –

patience –

But what if your students pulled a "D" in art class, like me? The truth is, even *I* can draw...just not well. Assure any reluctant artists that their drawings aren't going to be pinned to the church bulletin board. Or hand them a lump of playdough to sculpt instead. I think this tactile exercise can help them dig more deeply into the subject matter at hand. It's one thing to give a verbal definition of patience (see the previous question), but quite another to illustrate that word

⁵⁸ Jane Vella, *On Teaching and Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), xx, xxi.

in action. How would *you* do it? Take 60 seconds right now and draw a picture to illustrate “patience” in action. Use the space on the previous page, and share the result with a neighbor.

Here’s one more idea for those kinesthetic and tactile learners. Once a month, or every other month, combine your adult and children’s Sunday School classes. Role-play a Bible story together and then create actions or a “rap” to memorize a pertinent Bible passage. Let me give you a taste of how this might work.⁵⁹

Palm Sunday Skit: “Jesus, A Humble King”

Cast: Jesus, two disciples, a donkey and a colt, a donkey owner, a few children, a palm tree. *Be sure to have adults or older youth play some of the roles.*

The actors will act out whatever scene you pause at while you, the narrator, reads the story.

The time had come for Jesus to die on the cross and he and his disciples were walking to Jerusalem...

Outside the town of Bethphage, Jesus sat on the sidewalk and emptied the rocks out of his sandals...and said, “Gentlemen, it’s time to find a ride”... One disciple ran off...oops, the other way!...and came back in the driver’s seat of a slick new rental car... Jesus shook his head NO...the disciple tooted the horn...louder!...but Jesus still shook his head NO....

Another disciple ran off...oops, the other way!... and came back on a Harley... Jesus shook his head NO...the disciple revved the Harley...it was really loud...louder...but Jesus still shook his head NO...

Then Jesus told the two disciples, “Go on ahead to Bethphage and bring me back a donkey and her colt.”... The disciples looked at each other in astonishment...it was hard to tell which one’s mouth dropped open farther...but off they went, tooting the horn of the rental...and revving the Harley...to find a donkey and her colt.

Sure enough, in Bethphage they found a house with a couple donkeys in the backyard, grazing...(umm, grass is on the ground, not floating in the air)...and hee-hawing... The disciples untied the donkeys...and pulled on their reins...but the donkeys sat down and refused to budge... The disciples pulled harder...the donkeys hee-hawed...the disciples pulled harder still...the donkeys brayed louder...

So the disciples changed their tactics and tried singing a motivational 80’s tune, like “YMCA” with the actions...and finally the owner of the donkeys came out, yelling in a Yiddish accent, “Vy are you torturing my donkeys?”... The disciples said, “They are for the Lord!... The owner shrugged...and sent them on their way with the donkeys...

⁵⁹ For more skit examples, look for “Crazy & Creative Bible Stories for Preteens” and other books by Steven James. (The skit and devotion provided in this paper was written by Daniel and Sarah Habben. More skits are available. Just email me: habbsdan@gmail.com.)

This time Jesus nodded, YES!...and the disciples threw their cloaks on the colt for a saddle...Jesus hopped on...he was a really heavy load, but the colt didn't mind. Jesus and his entourage entered Jerusalem where a large crowd yelled, "Hosannah!"...and jumped up and down for a better view...and took pictures...and threw their cloaks on the ground in front of the donkeys...who tried to eat them (the cloaks, not the people)...

Some people climbed palm trees...and broke off palm branches... and then the people waved their branches...and yelled, "Hosanna in the highest!"...again...and again... These people were acknowledging Jesus as king, humble, and riding on a donkey.

Application: (Excitedly) "They're baaa-ack! Mid-week entertainment just got sing-ier. Who here is an American or Canadian Idol fan? Don't you love how a "Nobody" can become "Somebody" in the course of a couple months? If that small town Nobody has the pipes, works hard and plays the game just right, she might be North America's next Idol. That Idol walks away with the backing of a major record company...but EVEN BETTER THAN THAT they are handed keys to a slick new set of wheels. Their humble roots are left far behind when they scrunch down into the seat of a brand new Ferrari.

But WHAT IF that winning contestant claimed her Idol title and her car keys to the screams of multitudes of fans...and then went on her first PR tour on the seat of her old bicycle? Yeah, rrrrRight. She would never do that. She'd go zooming all over the country in her new set of wheels or a decked-out tour bus. So yeah, she might claim she is still the same small town girl, but you wouldn't know it by her actions.

(Quietly) The yells and chants of multitudes of fans. That's what the King of the Universe heard when he entered Jerusalem. That praise was rightly his. But the King of the Universe came humbly. No PR crew. No tech team. No flunkies to fluff his pillow. No Ferrari. Because the Son of man did not come to be served... but to serve. And to give his life as a ransom. For many. For me. For you.

So when you can't help but think the King of the Universe overlooked that prayer request of yours...or that He doesn't really care what your classmates are text-messaging behind your back...or that He's put your health-concerns on the backburner... or that He maybe even forgot you exist, remember: The King of the Universe gave up heavenly glory to ransom you. He paid for you with his pain and blood. You are His dear, beloved child.

Memory Treasure: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45).

You can learn this memory treasure in the form of a "rap" like this. First, get the class to stomp their feet and clap their hands using the beat from the rock song "We will, we will rock you!" As that beat continues, the leader says:

Mark it well Mark 10:45. / For even the Son of Man / did not come to be served, / but to serve, (to serve) / and to give his life as a ransom for many / for you, and you, and you and you and you!

Repeat the passage, but this time pause for the class to echo each phrase. Then repeat the verse using different voices (e.g. a whisper, a Winnie-the-Pooh voice, like you just inhaled helium, like a famous actor, etc.). After a number of rounds, ask volunteers to come up and recite the passage with you. You should get a number of eager volunteers from the Sunday School kids. And by the end of the lesson, everyone, children and adults, will have committed to memory a portion of God's Word.

You might feel silly doing this skit and memory "rap" with just your adult class, but once you add kids to the mix, many adults are willing to get a little goofy. Are you wondering if this approach has any value beyond entertainment? Well, consider the following: a Bible lesson is reviewed in an interactive way that involves kinesthetic and tactile learners; a thoughtful application is shared (see the devotion included on the previous page); and both adults and children commit a section of Scripture to memory. I encourage you to try it!

A GOOD FIT FOR BIC?

How much of what we covered in this paper can be used in a Bible Information Class (BIC) setting? All of it, really—especially if you have the numbers. (It's kind of hard to urge a student to turn to his neighbor to discuss a question when he's the only one in the class.) But even if you have a large enough BIC class for breakout groups, you may want to hold off until you've been able to impress on the class the authority of God's Word. Many educational institutions today are urged on by "constructivism" and "transformative" learning philosophies, neither of which embrace absolute truth. Regarding constructivism, Debra Espinor writes:

Constructivism asserts that knowledge cannot be just handed from one person to another, to be put on like an article of clothing. Knowledge must be constructed (or 'sewed,' using the clothing metaphor) and tried on and 'fitted' to the new learner.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ Heekap Lee editor, *Faith-based Education that Constructs* (Wipf & Stock: Eugene, Oregon, 2010), 15.

Transformative theorists generally believe that “a major purpose of dialogue is to merge ideas into the greater truth.”⁶¹ They will therefore put great value on inclusiveness.⁶² “The Handbook of Transformative Learning” states:

As there are no fixed truths or totally definitive knowledge, because circumstances change, the human condition may be best understood as a continuous effort to negotiate contested meanings. Milan Kundera, in *The Book of Laughter and Forgetting* (1981), wisely suggests that if there were too much incontestable meaning in the world we would succumb under its weight.⁶³

If your BIC students have been exposed to such teaching philosophies, they might well conclude that your small group activities are no different than what they do at their book-of-the-month club, where everyone is entitled to their own opinion! We’d want to avoid that at all costs, as the Apostle Paul is clear in his admonition to Timothy:

What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.¹⁴ Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you—guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us...² Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. (2 Timothy 1:13, 14; 4:2 NIV ’84)

Let’s not do anything that gives the impression that God’s Word is a sandcastle that can be refashioned at will. We have been called to teach God’s Word with authority and without apology! Still, this doesn’t mean that BIC is the one place you can be a Pre-chew Charlie. Your students can still wrestle with open questions (questions that invite them to reflect). They can read doctrinal statements and compare them to Bible verses they read. You can also use introductory learning tasks to get your class warmed up for the material and employ various review activities to help truths become more firmly planted. Forward me your examples!

CONCLUSION

Direct your attention to APPENDIX D on p. 39. It’s a two-page evaluation sheet I like to review before I write a new Bible study. Take 3 minutes to read it and circle at least two thoughts that you would like to remember the next time you prepare a Bible class. Then add any points

⁶¹ Rick and Shera Melick, *Teaching that Transforms* (B&H Academic: Nashville: 2010), 145-146.

⁶² Melick, *Teaching*, 145-146.

⁶³ Edward W. Taylor et al., *The Handbook of Transformative Learning* (Jossey-Bass: United States, 2012), 73.

you think are missing. Share with your neighbor the items you circled and added. The clock starts now.

Yes, it takes a lot of work to write a good Bible study. So wouldn't it be great if we would pool our resources more often? In APPENDIX E I direct you to some places where that's being done. Still, I wish there would be an easier way to upload and access material you all have written. (Perhaps this is something we can ask Adult Discipleship or NPH to work on again.) And can I encourage you to write more Bible studies? For example, when you're assigned a conference paper, why not ask the essay committee if you could write a Bible study instead? Do we really need more isagogical papers on the Minor Prophets, for example? We also seem to have few Bible studies on church history. Keep that in mind when you're assigned a paper commemorating the 500th anniversary of the Reformation.

We started this paper by talking about adopting the tenacity of Duke's Coach K., who still views game tape into the early hours of the morning. Augustine would have done the same, apparently. He said:

On earth we are always travelers, always on the go. Do not grow complacent with what you are. Where you have become pleased with yourself, there you get stuck. If you say "That's enough," you are finished. Always add something more. Keep on walking. Always forge ahead.⁶⁴

I hope this paper has encouraged you to keep striving to be the best adult Bible study leader you can be. Try some of the techniques shared in this paper. You may find something that really works for you and connects with your people. I know my teaching style has changed since I've started thinking more pointedly about how I design my classes. And I know I will continue to change as I learn from you. Let's keep encouraging one another so that we better connect God's people to God's Word.

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⁶⁴ Gary N. McCloskey, "Threads to be Woven: Characteristics of Augustinian Pedagogy," Presented at The O.S.A. Educators International Congress, Rome, Italy (July 2005): 16.

APPENDIX A

“Strong” Action Verbs for Writing Teaching Objectives

Action verbs for writing teaching objectives should be: Measurable, Observable, Definable, Understandable.⁶⁵

They can be applied to different levels of learning/performance in different domains. Here are examples of Action Verbs related to the Cognitive and Affective domains:

COGNITIVE DOMAIN

KNOWLEDGE

define, describe, identify, label, list, match, outline, reproduce, select, state

COMPREHENSION

convert, defend, distinguish, estimate, explain, extend, generalize, give example, infer, paraphrase, predict, rewrite, summarize

APPLICATION

change, compute, demonstrate, discover, manipulate, modify, operate, predict, prepare, produce, relate, show, solve, use

ANALYSIS

break down, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, identify, illustrate, infer, outline, point out, relate, select, separate, subdivide

SYNTHESIS

categorize, combine, compile, compose, create, devise, design, explain, generate, modify, organize, plan, rearrange, revise, categorize, combine, compile, compose, create, devise, design, explain, generate, modify, organize, plan, rearrange, revise, rewrite, summarize, tell, write

EVALUATION

appraise, compare, conclude, contrast, criticize, discriminate, explain, justify, interpret, relate, summarize, support

AFFECTIVE DOMAIN

RECEIVING

ask, choose, describe, follow, give, hold, identify, locate, name, point to, select, reply, use

RESPONDING (active participation)

answer, assist, compile, conform, discuss, greet, help, label, perform, practise, present, read, recite, report, select, tell, write

⁶⁵ Anthony Kan, “Msg. #170 Teaching Objectives - Action Verbs” *Tomorrow’s Professor* (<http://cgi.stanford.edu/~dept-ctl/tomprof/posting.php?ID=170>), accessed May 3, 2015.

APPENDIX A (cont.)

VALUING (worth or value a student attaches to a particular object)

complete, describe, differentiate, explain, follow, form, initiate, invite, join, justify, propose, read, report, select, share, study, work

ORGANIZATION (bringing together different values)

adhere, alter, arrange, combine, compare, complete, defend, explain, generalize, identify, integrate, modify, order, organize, prepare, relate, synthesize

CHARACTERIZATION BY A VALUE

act, discriminate, display, influence, listen, modify, perform, practice, propose, qualify, question, revise, serve, solve, use, verify

Jane Vella also has a good summary regarding a teacher's choice of verb when writing a lesson objective or learning task.

What verbs make a great learning task? *Tough Verbs*. By tough verbs I mean verbs that demand considered action, verbs that challenge a learner to stretch and grow. *Design, edit, decide, select, write, distinguish x from y, illustrate, organize, solve, resolve, and realign* are examples of what I call tough verbs. You can run, but you can't hide from these verbs; they do not allow pedantic play or abstract meandering.

Productive Verbs. You want verbs in your learning tasks that *produce* for your learners – verbs such as *list, design, compose, write, prepare, reorganize, select, develop, diagram, illustrate*, and so on. These verbs produce, and the products are indicators of the learning that is taking place... One of the verbs I avoid in learning tasks is *discuss*. The reason I don't use it is that there is no product of discuss; it can go on and on. It does not have the exhilarating immediacy in a learning task of verbs demanding a product such as *design, create, list*.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Jane Vella, *Taking Learning to Task* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 52.

APPENDIX B

Learning Task Concepts, Techniques, and Ideas⁶⁷

Four Types of Learning Tasks⁶⁸

- 1) **Inductive:** a learning task that connects learners with what they already know, within their unique context. It does not offer startling new information but instead invites learners to clarify what their present conception of the topic includes. Inductive tasks can use the verbs *describe, tell the story of, define, sketch, show, name, etc.*
(e.g. Describe two ways in which your congregation reaches out to the community with God's Word.)
Comparison is an instrument widely used in learning tasks. For example, to open a class on the sacraments you might ask: "How is baptism different from the Lord's Supper? List at least three differences."
Inductive tasks are also a good way to gauge the comfort level of your learners. (e.g. At the beginning of a Bible Information Course you might say, "Look over the table of contents for this course. What lesson excites you most? What lesson seems like it will be the most difficult for you?")
- 2) **Input:** a learning task (which may include lecture by the teacher) that invites learners to examine and grapple with new input (concepts, skills, or attitudes). (e.g. Read the following chapter on "come" and "go" strategies for outreach. Circle one "come" and one "go" strategy that you think would work well in your congregation.)
- 3) **Implementation:** a learning task that gets learners to do something directly with that new content, somehow implementing it. (e.g. In pairs, share the "come" and "go" strategies you circled in the previous learning task, and discuss how easy or how difficult it would be to implement them in your congregation.)
- 4) **Integration:** a learning task that integrates this new learning into their lives and work. It may be a learning task to be accomplished after the course or session, with a reporting element so that feedback can be offered. (e.g. At your table, devise a strategy and a schedule of implementation for one "come" or one "go" strategy. We'll hear a sampling of your ideas.)

The four learning tasks above are also called: Anchor, Add, Apply, Away.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Some ideas may work better in a school classroom setting or confirmation class than in a regular Bible class.

⁶⁸ Jane Vella, *Taking Learning to Task* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001), 33, 37-46.

⁶⁹ Jane Vella, *On Teaching and Learning* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2008), 164.

APPENDIX B (cont.)

Think-Pair-Share⁷⁰

Students first think about an answer before sharing with a partner.

This technique builds relationships within the group, allows the learner to negotiate meaning in a small, nonthreatening environment, and it encourages everyone to think and participate.⁷¹

Albert Bandura (b. 1925) did research on how people learn by observing others. He found that people are more likely to adopt the behaviors modeled by someone they hold in high esteem or can identify with. Pairing new converts with mature Christians can capitalize on this truth.⁷²

The Three-Person Rule⁷³

Designed to ensure that no one person in a discussion can monopolize the conversation. The rule is that once you have spoken, you are not allowed to make another contribution to the discussion until at least three other group members have spoken. The only time this rule is not observed is if someone directly asks you to expand on a comment you've already made.

Pass the Ball

After asking a question, pause to give students time to think of an answer. Then toss a beach ball or a soft toy to a student. That person must answer the question. They then pass the object on to the student of their choice for the next question.⁷⁴

Set a Psalm or Bible Passage to a Familiar Tune.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ I prefer encouraging class members to work in pairs rather than gathering in larger groups, because my current Bible study space is limited. It also takes less time to pair class members together than it does to move them into groups of three or more. Plus, if the groups get too large (over 4?) then you may be back to the problem of having one talker while everyone else in the group passively listens.

⁷¹ Rick and Shera Melick, *Teaching that Transforms* (B&H Academic: Nashville, 2010), 228.

⁷² Jim Gould, *Achieving QTLS Learning Theory and Classroom Practice in the Lifelong Learning Sector, 2nd Edition* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012), 116.

⁷³ Stephen D. Brookfield, *Ways to Evaluate Teaching*,

(http://stephenbrookfield.com/Dr._Stephen_D._Brookfield/Workshop_Materials_files/The_Skillful_Teacher.pdf), 2006, 30, accessed January 4, 2015.

⁷⁴ I did this when presenting a district convention paper/Bible study. If participants didn't want to answer the question posed, they were invited to simply bat the beach ball to someone else.

⁷⁵ Barbara Bruce, *7 Ways of Teaching the Bible to Adults* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 30.

APPENDIX B (cont.)

Bible Passage Rewrite⁷⁶

Take a Bible passage you have studied in depth and invite the class to rewrite it in a way a non-Christian can understand it.

Start Your Class with a Quiz

Word Matching⁷⁷

Example: To prime the students for a lesson on Ephesians 6, you could have cards with the various armor names on them that Paul describes in that section, and other cards with the spiritual characteristics. Ask the class to match the cards *before* they read Ephesians 6. Then have the class read through the chapter to see how they did. You then can seek to discover why Paul made the comparisons that he did.

Blank Map or Timeline

Same concept as above.

Refrigerator Passage Idea

After studying a portion of Scripture, ask the class to pick a passage they would like to stick on their fridge for the coming week. Each learner should be ready to explain why they picked that particular passage.

Artistic Expression⁷⁸

Have tables with colored paper, beads, paint, lego, play dough, pipe cleaner, crayons, old magazines to cut out pictures, etc. After studying a Bible passage in depth, invite the class to create something they could use to explain what they learned that day.

The Interview

Students read a section of Scripture and then pick a character from that section whom they would like to interview. Students then design an interview with at least five questions and include the responses they expect to hear.

⁷⁶ Rick and Shera Melick, *Teaching that Transforms* (B&H Academic: Nashville, 2010), 235-237.

⁷⁷ William R. Yount, ed., *The Teaching Ministry of the Church, 2nd Edition* (Nashville: Academic, 2008), 240.

⁷⁸ Rick and Shera Melick, *Teaching that Transforms* (B&H Academic: Nashville, 2010), 251.

APPENDIX B (cont.)

Paper Shuffle⁷⁹

Ask students to write a relevant question about the material covered. Give them 60 seconds to do this. Collect the papers, then shuffle and re-distribute them. Ask each student to answer the question he or she receives.

Make Metaphors

Invite the students to come up with original metaphors for theological concepts and words.

Example A: “Redemption is like a...”⁸⁰

Example B: “My work is like...” or “I am like...”⁸¹

(Pastors who gathered in Malawi for a conference were to finish the above-sentence using objects or pictures placed before them of a shepherd, farmer, fertilizer, fishing net, trumpet, sword, shovel, etc. They were also to be prepared to tell the rest of the group why they felt the object they chose best symbolized their work.)

Role-Play

Give your students time to role-play a situation with each other or with you (e.g. outreach techniques, explaining baptism to a friend, God’s Great Exchange, etc.).

Which One Doesn’t Belong?⁸²

Example: Give the students a written list of the Scripture principles of Romans 5:1-15. Include three principles that are true but are not found in this passage. The learners are asked to use their Bible to compare the list and identify those principles that don’t belong. When they have identified the three that are incorrect, they can check their work with a neighbor.

TV Commercial⁸³

In groups, students create a 30-second TV commercial for the subject currently being discussed in class. Students may also act out their commercials.

⁷⁹ Kevin Yee, *Interactive Techniques*,

(http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/TeachingAndLearningResources/CourseDesign/Assessment/content/101_Tips.pdf), accessed December 14, 2014.

⁸⁰ Rick and Shera Melick, *Teaching that Transforms* (B&H Academic: Nashville, 2010), 228.

⁸¹ Paul D. Nitz “A Practical Overview of Dialogue Education” paper supplied via email (Revised May 2014): 13.

⁸² Rick and Shera Melick, *Teaching that Transforms* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2010), 254.

⁸³ Kevin Yee, *Interactive Techniques*,

(http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/TeachingAndLearningResources/CourseDesign/Assessment/content/101_Tips.pdf), accessed December 14, 2014.

APPENDIX B (cont.)

The One Minute Paper⁸⁴

At the end of the lesson, invite your students to spend 60 seconds answering one of the following questions:

What could you teach someone to know or do that you couldn't teach them before this lesson?

What was the most important idea or insight in today's lesson?

What was the muddiest point in today's lesson?

Why did God include this passage in the Bible?⁸⁵

What do you learn about people from this story?⁸⁶

What do you learn about God?

What in this story will change your life this week? Or, How will you apply something from this story this week?

Who else needs to hear this truth and how will you share it with them?

Case Study⁸⁷

Example: The teacher introduces 1 Timothy 6:17-19 with the following case study: Jason, a 58-year-old financial planner, had a large house with a swimming pool, a vacation cabin, two BMWs, a ski boat, and \$800,000 in his retirement plan. He felt good about his future. He attended church regularly and gave several hundred dollars a month. He thought God was happy with him. Then the bottom dropped out of the economy. In two months' time, Jason found himself without a job and unable to make payments on his stuff. Look at 1 Timothy 6:17-19. How might this passage apply to his situation?

Use Crossword Puzzles/Word Searches to Conclude a Lesson

You can make use of several free online crossword puzzle and word-search makers to create your own crossword puzzle and word-search of key concepts you covered in a Bible study. This also works well for sermon summaries and can be easily included in the bulletin. This provides a fun way for parents to review the sermon with their children.

⁸⁴ Stephen D. Brookfield, *Ways to Evaluate Teaching*, (http://stephenbrookfield.com/Dr._Stephen_D._Brookfield/Workshop_Materials_files/The_Skillful_Teacher.pdf), 2006, 49, accessed January 4, 2015.

⁸⁵ Rick and Shera Melick, *Teaching that Transforms* (B&H Academic: Nashville, 2010), 235-237.

⁸⁶ Christine, Dillon, *Telling the Gospel Through Story: Evangelism That Keeps Hearers Wanting More* (Downers Grove: Intervarsity Press, 2012), 113-114.

⁸⁷ Rick and Shera Melick, *Teaching that Transforms* (B&H Academic: Nashville, 2010), 297-298.

APPENDIX B (cont.)

Speed Sharing

Students write definitions, concepts, quiz questions, etc. on index cards about the material they have just studied and form two concentric circles, facing each other. For 30-60 seconds they share their knowledge with the person opposite them. Then the outer circle “rotates” so that everyone has a new partner, and the sharing is repeated. This can be done until each student has completed the circuit.

Or, you, the teacher, can provide the statements/questions for the pairs to react to (for 60-90 seconds) before they move on to the next partner to discuss the next statement/question. Here’s an example of questions from a lesson on prayer:

1. Agree or disagree? Prayer is more of a burden than a pleasure.
2. Is prayer a dialogue or a monologue? Explain your answer. (Etc.)

After all the questions have been asked, the students return to their seats. The class is structured so that, by the end of the lesson, all the questions posed at the beginning of class will get answered, though perhaps not in the order they appeared in the introduction.

Tabloid Titles⁸⁸

Ask students to write a tabloid-style headline that would illustrate the main concept learned in class. Share with the rest of the class.

Bumper Stickers⁸⁹

Ask students to write a slogan-like bumper sticker to illustrate a particular concept from the class. Share with the rest of the class.

Pen a Proverb

Write a two-line proverb to succinctly capture a Biblical concept learned in class.

The “Hook-Book-Look-Took” Method

We’re taught this method at the seminary for constructing Bible studies. I commend it to you. Give your class a good introduction (hook) which drives them to the Word (book). Study the Word (look) and then apply it (took). Just make sure you’re not doing all the work. Incorporate learning activities in each stage of the lesson.

⁸⁸ Kevin Yee, *Interactive Techniques*, (http://www.fctl.ucf.edu/TeachingAndLearningResources/CourseDesign/Assessment/content/101_Tips.pdf), accessed December 14, 2014.

⁸⁹ Yee, *Interactive*.

APPENDIX B (cont.)

Affirm/Challenge⁹⁰

Have learners do a reading assignment and pick one quote they affirm and one quote they wish to challenge. (*You could do this with doctrinal statements from other church bodies.*)

Have the students discuss their quotes in a small group. Then bring the group together and ask: “As you dialogued with other students, what new information or perspectives did you learn about the topic? If nothing new emerged, what parts of your thinking were confirmed?”

“Teacher, What Do YOU Think?”⁹¹

When students ask you directly for an opinion on an issue, or the correct way to understand or apply a concept, you may be reluctant to state your view for fear of short-circuiting further discussion. One option is to tell the students you will give them two or three possible answers, only one of which represents your actual opinion (or the truth being illustrated in that particular Bible class). You then provide these options and ask the students to vote on which they think represents your actual opinion.

You then ask the students to explain why they chose answer A or B. What was it about that answer that connected them back to something they learned from God’s Word in that class? This will encourage continued critical thinking and analysis on the part of your class.

Sermon Note Questions

Include questions in your Sunday bulletin that not only ask content questions (What was this sermon about?), but which also encourage your listeners to put what they have learned into action (What does this sermon move you to DO this week?).

You can use these sermon note questions to review the sermon with your family each week, or you can use them in a small-group setting as a summer Bible study. In the latter case, divide the group into “families” and designate a communicant male member to be the head of that “household.” His job is to keep discussion going. If you use this idea, you might want to start with an icebreaker question (e.g. “If you could vacation anywhere in the world, where would you go?” “If you could be any character from a cereal box, who would you be and why?”) These fun activities will break the ice and help the group feel more comfortable with one another before they tackle the sermon note questions.

⁹⁰ Sharan B. Merriam, Laura L. Bierema, ed. *Adult Learning Linking Theory and Practice* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2014), 231.

⁹¹ Stephen D. Brookfield, *Ways to Evaluate Teaching*, ([http://stephenbrookfield.com/Dr. Stephen D. Brookfield/Workshop Materials files/The Skillful Teacher.pdf](http://stephenbrookfield.com/Dr._Stephen_D._Brookfield/Workshop_Materials_files/The_Skillful_Teacher.pdf)), 2006, 30.

APPENDIX B (cont.)

Snowballing⁹²

Students begin this activity by privately reflecting on a question or issue. They then create progressively larger dialogic groups by doubling the size of their group every few minutes until by the end of the activity everyone is reconvened in the large group. At each stage, as students move from pairs to quartets, and quartets to octets, they recap the chief point of difference, or the chief question that emerged in their previous round of conversation.

Jigsawing or Chunking⁹³

Divide the class into groups. Assign a different part of the lesson to each small group to master and present to the whole class.

Example: Form four equal-sized groups. Each group will be assigned part of the story of Job. Group 1: Job 3, 31 (Job); Group Two: Job 4 (Eliphaz); Group 3: Job 8 (Bildad); Group 4: Job 11 (Zophar).

Your small group has fifteen minutes to read your assigned chapter together and share impressions about the person you have been assigned. Choose one person to report what you have learned about your character to the class.

Ask for Multiples

Asking your class for multiple examples of an answer can encourage deeper thinking. I once asked this question on a lesson from Daniel 4:

God humbled Nebuchadnezzar through boanthropy (a psychological disorder where one thinks he is a cow). Although God's Son, Jesus, never suffered boanthropy, how was he treated like an animal throughout his life for *our* sake? List *at least* three examples.

I think it was pretty easy for the class to come up with two examples: Jesus was treated like an animal at his birth when placed in a manger, and when he was slaughtered at the cross. But by asking the class to come up with at least a third example they had to think a little harder about how Jesus had often been treated like an animal. I was pleased when I received these creative, yet biblically-sound answers: "Jesus was like an ant because he lifted way more than his weight—the world's sins." "Jesus was like a salmon because he swam against the stream." The student who had come up with these examples was visibly excited to share with the class because he wasn't just regurgitating something he had heard before. He was sharing an answer he had personally crafted after careful thought.

⁹² Stephen D. Brookfield, *Ways to Evaluate Teaching*, (http://stephenbrookfield.com/Dr._Stephen_D._Brookfield/Workshop_Materials_files/The_Skillful_Teacher.pdf), 2006, 11-12, accessed January 4, 2015.

⁹³ Barbara Bruce, *7 Ways of Teaching the Bible to Adults* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000), 42.

APPENDIX C

Malcom Knowles' Six Assumptions Regarding the Nature of Adult Learners⁹⁴

Self-concept

Everyone has their own particular view of themselves and their situation. Knowles considered that as a person matures, their self-concept moves from one of dependency towards that of a self-directed human being. On returning to an educational environment, however, the conditioning of their school experience can cause adult learners to revert to a dependent mode—a condition that is at odds with their adult status. Knowles advocates the use of learning activities that help adult learners make this transition from dependency to self-directedness.

Experience

Adults identify very strongly with their experiences. These form part of their identity. Therefore, to acknowledge experience is also to acknowledge the person. (In other words, let your adult learners share their experiences in class.)

Readiness to Learn

Adults are ready to learn that which they see as necessary to maintain and enhance their lives. (In other words, help your adult learners see why the material is worth learning.)

Orientation to Learning

Adults do not learn “subjects” but learn in order to complete tasks or solve problems they encounter in their daily lives. This learning demands an immediacy of results: tasks and problems need to be tackled “now” rather than on some distant future occasion. Postponed application is not an option. (In other words, every lesson should offer adult learners the opportunity to put into practice what they have learned.)

Motivation

Incentives such as increased job satisfaction, self-esteem, and quality of life, or just the need to keep growing and developing, become more important in giving adults a reason to learn.

The Need to Know

Knowles surmised that adult learners need to be made aware of what they need to know in order to commit fully to learning.

Knowles' assumptions are not without critics. They say that the assumptions ignore the social context within which learning takes place, and that they are culturally and politically specific because Knowles primarily studied white, middle to high income earners.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Jim Gould, *Achieving QTLS Learning Theory and Classroom Practice in the Lifelong Learning Sector, 2nd Edition* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012), 94-95.

⁹⁵ Gould, *Achieving*, 107.

APPENDIX D

Bible Class Teacher Evaluation Form

Date:

Class:

Teacher:

Evaluator:

The Teacher's Appearance

- Attire
- Grooming

The Lesson Plan

- Was the lesson objective clear? (e.g. "By the end of this lesson I want the participants to KNOW _____, to FEEL _____, and to DO _____.")

The lesson shouldn't just make spiritual smarty-pants out of participants. It should encourage participants to "build their house on the rock"—that is, put God's Word into practice.

- Did the teacher grab the participants' attention at the beginning of the lesson and make clear why the material was worth studying? Did the teacher include a learning activity in the intro?
- Was the lesson plan organized?
- Did the teacher summarize the main truths at the end of the lesson?
- Did the lesson capitalize on the way adults learn?
 - Did it offer self-directed, problem-solving opportunities? Or did you pull a "Pre-chew Charlie" and simply tell the class everything you learned in your Bible study prep?
 - Did it invite adults to share their experience?
 - Was there immediate application?

Lesson Plan Execution

- Did the class start and end on time?
- Were the student handouts, projector, screen, speaker volume, etc. in place before class?

APPENDIX D (cont.)

Lesson Plan Execution (cont.)

- Was the PowerPoint professionally done (high resolution pictures, readable fonts, few and purposeful animations, etc.)?
- Did the teacher know the lesson well?
- Did the teacher stay on track with the lesson plan without stifling teachable moments?
- Presentation Volume
(Were questions and answers from the class repeated so those in the back could hear them?)
- Articulation
- Speed of Speech
- Command of Language
- Distracting Mannerisms
- Eye Contact
- Enthusiasm for Material
- Use of Questions
 - Were the questions clear?
 - Were the questions engaging (open questions) or simply fact questions (closed questions)?
 - Was sufficient wait time demonstrated before calling on a respondent?
 - Were a variety of people called on to answer?

Other Comments:

What changes (if any) would you, the teacher, make to this lesson if you were to teach it again? Why?

APPENDIX E

Bible Study Resources

I scoured the web but didn't find many resources that are worth your time. A lot of online Bible studies were either too simplistic or more like devotions, or even papers. Here is what I did find:

Teach the Word newsletter from WELS Adult Discipleship (free)

<http://visitor.r20.constantcontact.com/manage/optin?v=001YkmmIsds1mou-QYeIKzdqgulj42BT3D> If that link doesn't work, contact NPH directly.

Northwestern Publishing House

Of course you know about the Bible studies they have for sale, but do you know about the NPH Online Bible Study Workshop Archives? Once you log on to your NPH account, you should be able to access this for free (or for a one-time fee). It's a collection of Bible studies that were submitted to NPH by WELS pastors. If you're looking for some ideas, it's a decent place to start. Speak to NPH's subscription services for more information.

NPH's Whole Bible Project (\$300) provides short lessons for every book of the Bible. It's a good thought-starter for any course you may be writing.

The Seelsorger Website (www.seelsorger.org/site/)

This was started by WELS pastor Rick Tuttle as a place for confessional Lutherans to upload Bible studies and worship material. It's free, but you'll need to contact Rick for a password.

whatdoesthismean.org/bible-studies.html

A website by a LCMS pastor who provides free weekly Bible studies.

Small Group Bible Study Resources

Jon Hein "Small Groups: The Concerns & The Inevitability" (paper presented at Cottonbelt Conference, Hiram, GA. May 4-6, 2015)

Sticky Church by Larry Osborn

Osborn stresses that small groups are primarily a way of closing the back door. However, he stresses sermon-based small groups only. That could rob the church of the ability to use small groups to do some good things like membership training, community service, etc.

The other thing Osborn urges is that the groups stay together for quite a while. That could discourage people from trying small groups.⁹⁶

⁹⁶ Jon Hein, June 25, 2015 email to author.

APPENDIX E (cont.)

Small Group Bible Study Resources (cont.)

Activate: An Entirely New Approach to Small Groups by Nelson Searcy
Good advice on how to organize small groups, though we would probably encourage more pastoral oversight than Searcy does.⁹⁷

Leading Life-Changing Small Groups by Bill Donahue
Helpful in training small group leaders on how to ask good Bible study questions.⁹⁸

Leading Small Groups with Purpose by Steve Gladen
Teaches small group leaders how to forge a sense of community within their small group.⁹⁹

Dialogic Education Resources

Paul D. Nitz “A Practical Overview of Dialogue Education” paper supplied via email by Professor Tom Kock.

Learning to Listen, Learning to Teach (Jane Vella, 1994 & 2002)

Taking Learning to Task (Jane Vella, 2001)

On Teaching and Learning, subtitled “Putting the Principles and Practices of Dialogue Education into Action (Jane Vella, 2008)

Dialogue Education at Work: A Case Book (Jane Vella and Associates, 2004)

globalearningpartners.com “At Global Learning Partners we believe in the transformative power of learning through dialogue. Our mission is to collaborate with you in achieving your mission by facilitating meaningful personal, professional, and organizational development.”

See also, authors: Malcom Knowles, Kurt Lewin.¹⁰⁰

Interactive Skits for a Family-style Bible Study

“Crazy & Creative Bible Stories for Preteens” and other books by Steven James

I’m also happy to share the Bible studies I have written. Some studies do a better job than others using the techniques encouraged in this paper. Still, you’re welcome to adapt them to your needs. Email me at habbsdan@gmail.com. - Daniel Habben

⁹⁷ Jon Hein, June 25, 2015 email to author.

⁹⁸ Hein, June 25 email.

⁹⁹ Hein, June 25 email.

¹⁰⁰ Paul D. Nitz “A Practical Overview of Dialogue Education” paper supplied via email (Revised May 2014): 6.

APPENDIX F

You worked hard on putting that Bible study together; now work hard to promote it! I use bulletin inserts like the ones below (which I have sized to fit these pages) and also add a small blurb in the bulletin to promote that particular Sunday's Bible study. Others have even made "movie trailer" video clips to promote their upcoming studies.

Daniel

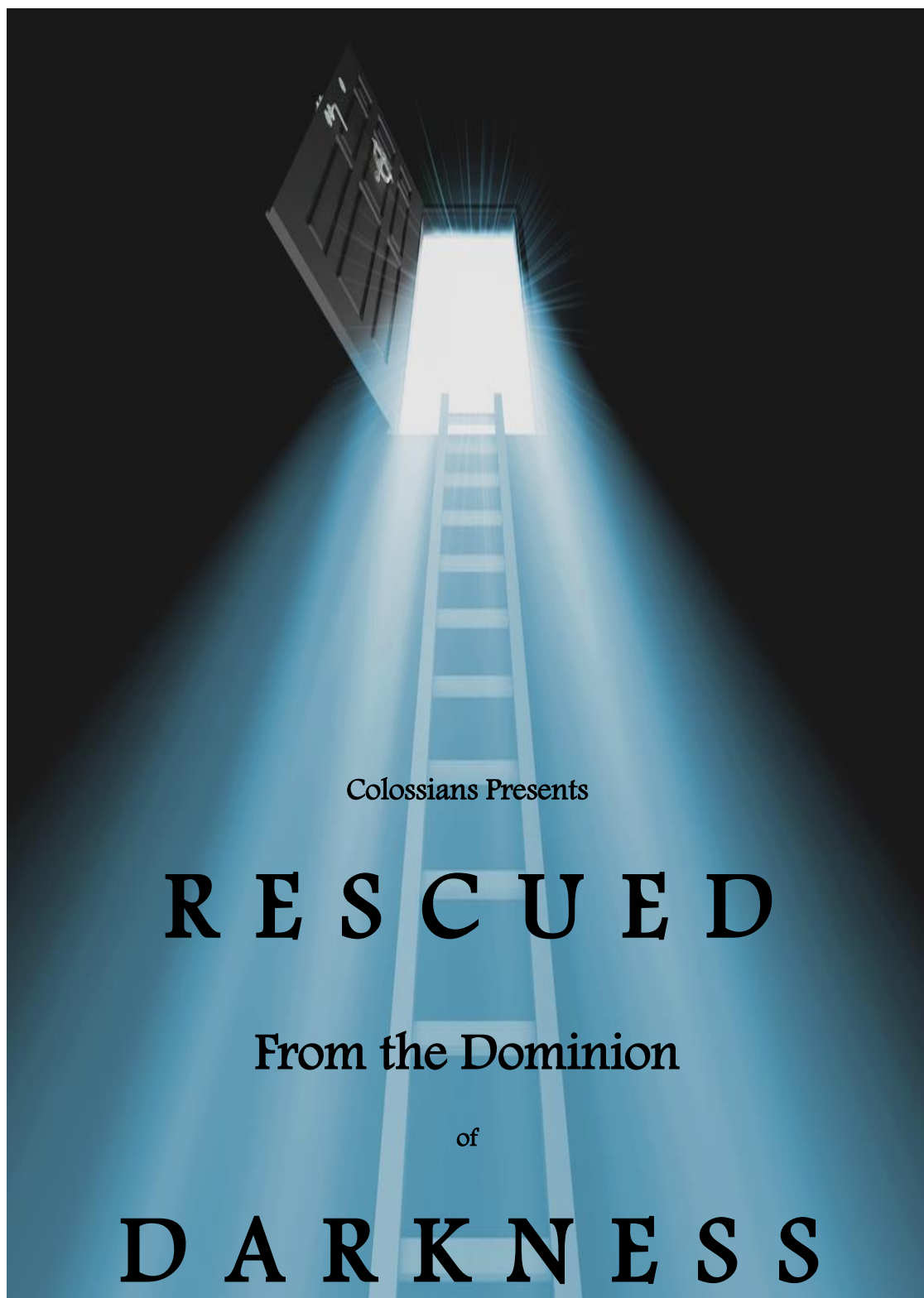
So much more than a lion tamer.



Read between the lions and discover
Daniel's diligence beyond the den.

Class starts TODAY!

APPENDIX F (cont.)



Colossians Presents

RESCUED

From the Dominion

of

DARKNESS

44
Starts TODAY in a Bible Class Near You

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