

*Using Questions
When Teaching Children*

WHY ASK QUESTIONS IF YOU'RE THE ONE TEACHING?

- Questions encourage and help the children to pay attention and to think about what is being said.
 - The children's answers to our questions can give us insight into their thinking.
 - Children enjoy answering questions.
 - Asking questions model good Bible study habits and skills.
 - Asking questions can be helpful in a teacher's personal study/preparation time.
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LEARNING HOW TO ASK GOOD QUESTIONS IS A SKILL. SOME IDEAS FOR STARTING TO LEARN THIS SKILL:

- *"...You learn to ask good questions by practicing asking dumb and bad questions. There's no such thing as a dumb question, but some of them aren't very fruitful and some of them lead you off the context, but you just practice, it's a skill." - Rich Chaffin*
- Think of a few simple questions (or look up questions others have used), write them down, and see if you can use them each week as you study. (With time you can build on these and have your own repertoire of questions.)
- Whenever you come across other questions, write these down on that paper. You might find more questions by looking for Bible study questions on the internet, reading a book on a Bible study method, listening to pastors teach sermons, and continuing to think of more yourself as you study and prepare for your class.
- Choose a Scripture verse and ask as many questions on that one verse as you can. You may want to write each question down. See if you can reach 100 questions.
- Don't overlook the simple questions with their simple answers. Sometimes these can have big implications.

Who, what, when, where, why, and how questions...

Who:

Who is talking? Who wants to sit on Jesus' right hand and left hand when He comes into His glory? Who returned? Who are they?

What:

What are they saying? What's the relationship between this and that? What's the comparison? What's the significance of this or that? What has been their struggle the whole three years they were with Jesus? What does this mean? What did the multitude do when they found this out? What had they just done? What had just happened? What happened next? What might the consequences be for them? What choice did they make? What was the result of the choice made?

When:

When did Jesus go up on the mountain? When did they believe? When did they say this?

Where:

Where did Jesus take them to? Where did they come from? Where was Jesus going? Where had Jesus just come from?

Why:

Why did it happen? Why did this happen right now? Why did this king do this? Why is Elijah mad? Why is he depressed? Why does he say this? Why this? Why here? Why say this now? Why was this word used?

How:

How did Jesus react to this? (What did Jesus do when this happened?) How long was he there? How long was the famine? How is that going to happen?

Miscellaneous questions...

Do you see a problem here? Had this ever happened before? Might that have affected them? Has anyone else done this in the Bible? Is there a contrast between this and that? This person and that person? Does God have anything to say about _____? Did Jesus ask a question here? Why would Jesus ask a question? What might be the answer to His question?

Is there in this verse a:

- Promise to claim?
- Sin to avoid?
- Warning to heed?
- Command to obey?
- Good example to follow?
- Bad example to shun?
- New/fresh thought about God the Father?
- New/fresh thought about God the Son?
- New/fresh thought about God the Holy Spirit?
- Fresh insight into the person of Satan?
- Fresh insight into Satan's cruel goals?
- Fresh insight into Satan's subtle devices?

ASKING CHILDREN QUESTIONS: CHILDREN ARE YOUNG PEOPLE.

Communicate in the language of your listeners.

- Children lack vocabulary. If we're not communicating to them with words they understand, they're not going to understand.
- Many children are very literal.
- Aim for clarity in your questions. Vague questions aren't as helpful and can be confusing.

Open-ended and close-ended questions:

- Close-ended questions tend to have a yes/no answer or a one-word answer. These can be helpful to open up the channels of communication. These can also help to build confidence in the children to continue answering your questions.
- Open-ended questions often require more thought to answer, and more than a simple one-word answer. These can encourage longer and more detailed answers, and thus get the children talking more.

CREATING AN ENVIRONMENT THAT ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO ANSWER YOUR QUESTIONS: CHILDREN ARE PEOPLE.

Treating a child as a person will go a long way in making an impact on them! Realizing and remembering that they are people will affect many aspects of how we interact with them.

- Our responses to wrong answers are important. If a student gives a wrong answer, protect the child from unnecessary embarrassment. Respond with kindness and sensitivity.
- Consistently give encouragement when children give answers.
- Do I listen to them, actively listen? Am I valuing what they have to say?
- Don't interrupt students' answers.
- Ask your questions in a way that shows you are interested in the children's answers and in studying the passage together with them. Avoid asking questions in a way that makes children feel that they are taking a test, that they are being tested.
- Am I friendly? Do I avoid stressing the kids out? Do they feel like I'm testing them? Try to make the teaching time/discussion as much like a conversation as possible.

- Give time for students to think about your question and then to answer. Leave enough time for the children to either look up the answer in the Bible or to think about your question and the answer. Don't assume the children know how to look things up or find answers to your questions (even if they're clearly in the Bible passage).
- Sometimes a teacher can feel uncomfortable with any pauses. We need to give some space so that the children have enough time and feel the freedom to give their input.

MORE LOGISTICS OF USING QUESTIONS WITH CHILDREN:

- Will children take advantage of being able to talk throughout the Bible study time?
- What about the children who won't answer questions?
- Questions are a tool.
- Don't force children to read!
- What size class can this work with?

OPENING UP THE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION:

- Greet the children.
- Make a habit of talking with the children. Ask them questions about their week, etc.
- Don't interrupt the children while they're talking with you. Listen to them.
- Give responses and show enthusiasm.
- Be aware of body language/eye contact.
- Try to learn and remember their names (and use them).
- Show the children that you are happy to have them in class.

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1. *Practice* asking questions
 2. Remember that children are *people*
 3. Remember that children are *young* people

JESUS TURNS Water Into Wine

John 2:1-12

MEMORY VERSE

"This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him."

John 2:11

TRUE OR FALSE:

- 1 "On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there." *John 2:1*
- 2 "Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding." *John 2:2*
- 3 And when they ran out of water, the mother of Jesus said to Him, 'They have no water.' *John 2:3*

TRUE
 FALSE

TRUE
 FALSE

TRUE
 FALSE

Circle the Correct Words:

- 4 "His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, (**DON'T DO IT, DO IT**).'" *John 2:5*
- 5 "Now there were set there (**SEVEN, SIX, FIVE**) waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing (**TEN OR FIFTEEN , TWENTY OR THIRTY**) gallons apiece." *John 2:6*

TRUE OR FALSE:

- 6 "Jesus said to them, 'Fill the waterpots with wine.' And they filled them up to the brim." *John 2:7*

TRUE
 FALSE

Circle the Correct Words:

- 7 "When the master of the feast had tasted the (**WATER, WINE**) that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the (**BRIDE, BRIDEGROOM**)." *John 2:9*
- 8 "...and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the (**GOOD, BAD**) wine until now!" *John 2:10*
- 9 "This beginning of (**TEACHINGS, SIGNS**) Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him." *John 2:11*