



Restoring New Testament
Practices to Today's Church

How To Teach Interactively

by Steve Atkerson

How To Teach Interactively (Discussion-Centered Learning)

Note: This follow-along handout is intended for use with the free **internet audio** presentation found here at www.NTRF.org.

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What are the advantages of teaching via the discussion method?

I. The Three Types of Questions

Analyze the three questions below. All are based on Romans 1:16. How do they illustrate three different types (kinds) of questions?

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.” — Ro 1:16

1. “What does this verse tell us about the gospel?”
2. “Why is salvation first for the Jew, and then for the Gentile?”
3. “Based on Romans 1:16, what attitude should we have toward the gospel?”

The three type of questions are:

1. _____ This deals with what the text actually says. The answer to this type of question should be obvious from the text itself.
2. _____ This deals with what the text means. Questions that begin with “why” tend to clarify. Anytime one has to go outside of the text under study to answer a question, that question is interpretive. Outside sources would be things such as cross references or lexicons.
3. _____ This type of question deals with what the text means to us today. The first two types of questions (above) constitute the “WHAT.” They are content oriented. The third type of

question constitutes the “SO WHAT.” It was to do with life change & application.

TEST: How would you categorize each of the questions below?

“I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.” —Ro 1:16

- A. How can we get the power of God for salvation?
- B. Of what was Paul “not ashamed”?
- C. What does the word “gospel” mean?
- D. What is the gospel message?
- E. According to this verse, why was Paul not ashamed of the gospel?
- F. From what do we need “salvation”?
- G. What did Paul mean by “everyone”?
- H. Why is salvation first to the Jew?
- I. What is a “Gentile”?
- J. What would it mean for us to be “ashamed” of the gospel today?
- K. What should our hope of salvation be grounded in?

II. Asking Good Questions

1. First, _____ the text to be sure that you (as the teacher) really know what it means. Observe what it says, do word studies, interpret it, and apply it to your own life.

2. Adopt the motto: “Never _____ when you can _____.” The only time you should lecture is when you’ve asked a question that they cannot answer correctly. Your job is to help people discover truth for themselves. Help them to draw their own conclusions by asking the right questions.

3. Analyze the text and then _____ all of your questions in advance of the meeting.

4. Once your questions are written out, imagine how people will _____ and then _____ your questions if necessary.

5. Arrange your questions in a _____ sequence. Realize that you are not asking questions merely for the sake of asking questions. Your objective is to cause other believers to _____ with the Scriptures, to think about what God's Word really means, and then to apply it to their own lives.

6. Although your questions will be written out in advance, when teaching the group ask your questions in a _____, using your natural voice inflection & vocabulary.

7. Launch the discussion of each new paragraph being examined with a good _____ question. Ask this observation question just prior to having someone read the text.

8. Once you have asked a question, look at the group and _____ for an answer. Do not be afraid of _____.

9. Help _____ the discussion once an answer is given. Do this by asking questions like: "What else do you see in this verse?" "Would anyone like to add anything to that?" "Would you explain your answer more fully?" "Why do you say that?"

10. _____ the group's discussion & ideas. Review what has been said.

11. Be sure to give careful attention to the _____ questions. If the "what" (content) does not lead to the "so what" (application), then you have not taught the "what" correctly.

12. Beware of calling on specific individuals to answer _____ or _____ questions. These are very difficult questions and could easily embarrass or offend someone. Example: “Bill, are you saved?” or “Jane, what does the word ‘gospel’ mean?”

13. Cultivate the _____ to ask the right questions. Teaching really is an art. It is a gift that must be developed. Practice helps!

III. Pitfalls to Avoid

1. Avoid questions that evoke a _____ response. Example: “Was Paul ashamed of the gospel?”

•Why should you avoid asking this type of question?

2. Avoid _____ questions that are _____ as to what you are asking. You are not conducting a mind-reading contest! Example: “What are the six great truths that are evident in Romans 1:16?”

3. Avoid questions that are too _____. Beware of combining two _____ into one. Example: “Who got salvation first and who is salvation for?”

4. Avoid questions that use _____. Example: “What aspects on the atonement are evident in this verse that are consistent with the reformer’s concept of soteriology?”

5. Avoid initiating _____ or _____ problems and issues. Example: “According to Romans 1:16, salvation is for everyone who believes. What relationship is there between salvation and speaking in tongues?”

6. Avoid majoring on _____. Do not get bogged down in minute details. Not being able to see the forest for the trees can demoralize the group.

7. Avoid being a _____. Show enthusiasm. There is nothing spiritual about being boring.

IV. Common Problems

1. Cathy Chatty.

2. Rabbit Trails.

3. Wrong Answers.

4. Hard Questions From the Group.

5. Untrained Minds.

6. Contentious People. Matthew 5:39, 2 Timothy 2:22-26, Romans 12:17-21

V. Philosophy of Teaching

1. You, as teacher, must take the responsibility for seeing that _____ takes place!
2. Teach to meet _____ in the lives of the people in your church. Remember that your _____ does not have a need to be taught. It is the people present who have needs!
3. Always boil your lesson down to the _____. Be able to state in a sentence or two the main point to the Biblical text being studied. You must have a clear _____ in mind when teaching. A well prepared lesson plan is to a teacher what a road map is to a traveler.
4. In Ezra 7:8-10, what did Ezra do prior to teaching God's Word?
5. Based on 1 Timothy 1:3-7, what should your goal and motive be when teaching? (See 1Ti 6:3-5, Ep 4:15, Tit 2:1)
6. The ability to teach God's Truth is a spiritual gift and, along with the other gifts, is _____ for the building up of the church (Mt 28:18-20, Ac 2:42, Ro 12:3-8, 1Co 12:12-31, Ep 4:11-16).
7. Do not become a teacher without first considering the _____ of such a ministry (Jam 3:1).
8. Be aware of any Scriptural _____ regarding teaching. 1 Timothy 2:11-15 does mean something and all those who love the Lord Jesus will want to take it seriously, seeking His face for its correct application.

VI. Teaching Tools

1. BOOKS, TEACHING.

- Contact Walk Thru The Bible (800-763-5433) in Atlanta and get a copy of their two audio tape series, *The Seven Laws of The Learner* (#50309) by Bruce Wilkinson & *The Seven Laws of The Teacher* (#51309) by Howard Hendricks.
- An excellent book now out of print, *How To Lead Small Group Bible Studies*, by NavPress, is worth buying if you can find it anywhere.

2. BOOKS, BIBLE STUDY.

- An exhaustive concordance for whatever version of the Bible you prefer. Just be sure that it is coded to Strong's numbering system!
- Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*, Joseph Thayer (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1977). Get a version that is numerically coded to Strong's numbering system.
- New Bible Dictionary*, Wood & Miller, eds. (Intervaristy Press: ISBN 0830814396)
- A Greek-English Lexicon of the NT and Other Early Christian Literature*, Baurer, Arndt, Gingrich, Danker (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1979). Note: a basic knowledge of Greek is needed to use this work.
- The New International Dictionary of NT Theology*, Colin Brown (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1971)
- How to Read The Bible For All Its Worth*, Fee & Stuart, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1982)

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Revised 01/09

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Steve and his wife Sandra live in Georgia. God blessed them with three children, two still at home and one married. Steve is a graduate of Georgia Tech and worked for several years in industrial electronics before heading off to seminary. While in seminary he was on the part-time staff of a 14,000 member mega-church. After receiving a Master of Divinity degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Memphis, he served on the pastoral staff of a Southern Baptist Church with a membership of around 1000 folks. After seven years in the traditional pastorate, he resigned to begin working with churches that desire to follow apostolic traditions in their church practice. He thus has transitioned all the way from mega churches to micro churches! Since 1990 he has traveled and taught about the practice of the early church as the Lord opens doors of opportunity. Steve is an elder at a local house church, is president of NTRF, edited *Toward A House Church Theology*, authored both *The Practice of the Early Church: A Theological Workbook* and *The Equipping Manual*, and is editor of and a contributing author to both *Ekklesia: To The Roots of Biblical House Church Life* and *House Church: Simple, Strategic, Scriptural*.

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