

LEADERSHIP LESSON 32: EFFECTIVE USE OF QUESTIONS IN A SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

OUTLINE BY RANDY LAMON

Effective teaching involves far more than simply passing on biblical content or information. Effective teaching involves teaching in such a way that spiritual transformation occurs in the lives of the learners who hear you teach. Almost any teacher can teach in a way that communicates facts or information, however, our goal should be for our learners to discover spiritual truth and apply it to their lives. Most often, spiritual truth is something that is discovered by a learner, not something that is taught by a teacher. For the process of spiritual transformation to begin, we must teach in a way that helps our learners discover truth. When this happens, application is more easily made to their lives.

A question that is properly placed and properly asked in your Sunday School lesson can be a great tool in helping your learners discover spiritual truth. The greatest teacher in history, Jesus Christ, perfectly modeled for us how effective questions can be in the teaching/learning process. All throughout the Gospels we find recorded instances of how Jesus used questions to impart deeper spiritual understanding and truth. Often, these questions literally pricked people to their heart. The questions He asked caused his listeners to go beyond the simple and ordinary answers to a deeper level.

Consider the following when using questions in your Sunday School lesson:

- 1) **AVOID** questions that can be answered with a “**yes**” or “**no**” or other simple answer. Objective questions that simply provide an answer usually don’t aid you in teaching a lesson. Use these type questions in cases such as wanting your learners to find specific answers contained in God’s Word.
- 2) **ASK** subjective questions when possible. Subjective questions are questions that require thought by your learners and don’t have a “pat” answer. Getting your learners to use their minds is the first step towards discovery of spiritual truth and transformation.
- 3) **ANSWER** questions with **questions**. When involved in discussion, often your learners will pose a question back to you. When that happens, don’t be afraid to turn the question back to that individual or class and ask for their responses to that question. This can lead to some great discussion.
- 4) **ALLOW** time for **responses**. Sometimes when a question has been asked you must learn to “wait them out.” Some teachers will panic if an answer or response doesn’t come immediately. A good question will require some time for your learners to think about their response. Don’t be scared by the “deafening silence” that often occurs after a well-asked question.
- 5) **ANSWERING** the question yourself shouldn’t be an option. If you have allowed ample time for responses and they are slow in coming, consider asking the question again or changing the wording of the question to ask it in another form.

- 6) **ALL** responses should be **valued**. Even if an incorrect or off-base answer is given, be careful not to hurt the feelings of the person giving the response. When this happens, often that will mark the end of responses from other learners and the end of the discussion. Nobody likes to be put on the spot or embarrassed. If the initial answers or responses are not what you are looking for, acknowledge the responses you have heard and keep the responses coming by asking, “Who else has a response?” or “What other responses do we have?”
- 7) **ALWAYS** thank each person or the group for their input. After a question has been answered or discussion has ended, end it in a positive note by thanking the individuals and/or group for the good input. This will help to encourage further participation when the next question is asked.
- 8) **ALLOW** some time in your personal preparation to either find or develop questions that will be used in your lesson. The Sunday School material that LifeWay produces provides excellent teaching resources for preparation and questions that can be used during the lesson. Don’t be afraid to think of questions yourself and use them during the lesson. Just as answering a question often involves some thought; developing questions to ask also involve some thought.

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LISTENING GUIDE: Effective Use of Questions in a Sunday School Lesson

1. _____ questions that can be answered with a _____ or _____.
2. _____ subjective questions when possible.
3. _____ questions with _____.
4. _____ time for _____.
5. _____ the question yourself shouldn't be an option.
6. _____ responses should be _____.
7. _____ thank each person or the group for their input.
8. _____ some time in your personal preparation to either find or develop questions that will be used in your lesson.