

Improving Your Teaching

Each teacher should try to find a teaching method that works for him or her. Here are a few key ingredients to jump start your thinking.

Show enthusiasm! Even the traditional lecture/discussion format can work when a teacher appears to be “into it”. It is hard to be this way unless you’re reasonably prepared and comfortable with the subject. Still, a degree of enthusiasm can be put on, even if you’re insecure on other counts. Praying can increase your sense of purpose and give you inspiration!

Choose three main points to emphasize. This limits your focus and makes your lesson preparation more manageable by giving you direction in pursuing more detailed information and streamlining study.

Don’t rely exclusively on a written document as you teach. Books such as Dole's *Bible Study Notes* (available for purchase from newchurchbooks.com) are good for getting you thinking about the basic meaning of the story. They help you pick a few ideas to emphasize, but, as a general rule, don’t read from exclusively from the written page in class! It becomes boring fast, and opens opportunities for discipline issues.

Provide a variety of activities for each class. Professional teachers aim to change the pace of a lesson approximately every five minutes. Changes might include where everyone is sitting in the room, singing a song, engaging in choral reading, quiet listening, standing up to stretch or move about, doing a craft project, coloring a picture, acting out a story, *etc.*

Provide variety in activities from week to week. The children will look forward with joyful anticipation to each new adventure. When children know what to expect every week even fun activities can be boring.

Prepare a project. Children enjoy working with their hands well into the teen years. This involves more preparation, but the results are well worth it. When hands, hearts and minds are involved together lessons are remembered with joy.

Get students’ hands working on something as soon as possible. This may take some students’ attention away from the lesson, but it will free up others to listen and participate.

Think broadly about the word “projects”. This can mean anything that involves more than just thinking, verbal response and writing. It could be a game, a craft, an artistic production using any variety of materials, or a drama. The sky is the limit!