

## Teaching Through Leading Discussion Week 2 Teacher's Notes

### Planning a discussion

Planning a discussion begins in the same way as planning a regular teaching, or lecture. If you are teaching a passage expositively (either didactic or narrative) you need to

1. Do your inductive study taking special care with the "strategic" question. The strategic question points to the author's purpose for saying what he says. That usually means your purpose as an expository teacher will be similar, or at least related. To make your points seem like they rise up out of the text, you need to be in line with the author's purpose, although the differences between his audience and yours will dictate some modifications.
2. Then create appropriate antitheses for each strategic point. The antitheses may be:
  - What will happen if we fail to do, know, or believe what he says
  - What we typically see in real life instead of the thesis
  - The opposite of the thesis (good with abstract ideas or moral qualities). See sample below. Antitheses are used in teaching to make the presentation interesting. The violence of collision between your theses and antitheses makes the teaching seem dynamic and makes your points seem important. This collision, or debate, brings in the emotional component in preaching or in discussion.

<b>Philippians 1:3-11 For the Philippians: Love, Discernment, and Fruit</b>		
<b>Info on Author</b> Paul in prison 7	<b>Audience</b> Partnership = support? Their local ministry?  Lacking knowledge & discernment?  Needing the longer view?	<b>Third Party</b>
<b>Language</b>		
<b>Historical</b> – his relationship with them = very important and affectionate		

**Theological**

1. Thanksgiving connected ministry relationships, good feelings that come from partnership are part of the 12 baskets full.
2. The partnership of committed workers = one of the key joys God has intended for us.
3. "Confident" v. 6 could be a figure of speech meaning he believes God will do it. It was spoken to a specific audience in light of his knowledge of them. Whether it would apply in a literal sense to all Christians is doubtful.
4. Vs. 8 Love includes affection and feelings, not just doing and serving.
5. The "affection of Christ" must refer to Jesus warm-heartedness.
6. Love contains the component of knowledge or that love is contained by knowledge, or truth. These are not antithetical or inversely proportional. Implies that love could grow without knowledge.
7. Good discernment is needed—it is connected to knowledge. The ignorant have a hell of a time discerning.
8. Knowledge that doesn't lead to purity, blamelessness, and fruit is carnal knowledge. Fruit is connected to knowing, loving and discerning. "To the glory of God" = non-egotistical

**Theses**

1. Camaraderie with Phillipians remembered before instruction-- Warm up the water with people before going on to imperatives. Relationship is the best context for admonishment.
2. v.6 Confidence in them expressed before admonishment
3. Affection, expressed before admonishment
4. Love is not enough—knowledge and discernment are also needed, especially seen by their flirting with legalists
5. Bearing fruit must follow from godly knowledge, but are the legalists bearing fruit?  
Or, if you want to bear real fruit, go with God's truth, not with the pseudo fruit of self-effort.

**Antitheses**

1. A. Hit people with the truth and they can take it or leave it—no relational work needed  
B. Lone ranger minister, Autonomous worker who misses joy of teamwork
2. Negative vision—warnings are the mainstay of the relationship
3. Admonishment w/out affection
4. Love is enough, who needs knowledge?  
Or, "Knowledge undermines, or impedes, love 1 Cor. 8 [also postmodern "relationship only" or interpretive community theories]
5. Dead knowledge that fails to affect the city for God  
Fruit of righteousness comes from focusing on the law

**Application**

1. Points 1-3 are real sore points for me, especially when I'm not being deliberate, ie. Daily life. Wife and kids are the easiest to omit, also closest friends.
2. Paul was a type-A personality, but had learned the importance of nurturance.
3. Antithesis#4a. is loose in our church. Bring in I Cor. 3 and Heb 5 on milk and meat. Proverbs on hating instruction and loving ignorance. Teach the Word as a means. Answer I Cor. 8, 1,2 with Mat. 22 loving God with our mind
4. See student we know who went to seminary and lost his ability to minister and invest in people
5. Check your balance between love, knowledge, and discernment by the fruit you are bearing. Must define fruit in pretty broad terms—both ministry and character

**Exercise:** Write a question that might elicit each of the strategic points above and each of the antitheses. Then write one or two for each of the application points or similar points

**Thesis:** We should remind people of our relationship and the value we place on them before moving to admonition.

**Question:**

**Antithesis:** Tell people the truth and let the chips fall... If they can't handle the truth, maybe that's bringing to light some pride they need to deal with.

**Question:**

**Thesis:** People respond to our admonition when they know we believe in them

**Question:**

**Antithesis:** People need to have their butts kicked pretty often!

**Question:**

**Thesis:** Knowledge is a crucial component in true, biblical love.

**Question:**

**Antithesis:** Most Christians today are into a head-trip. They think their knowledge makes the spiritual.

**Question:**

**Thesis:** Grace bears more fruit than law.

**Question:**

**Antithesis:** God's rules are there to help us bear fruit.

**Question:**

**Application:** Our home church needs more discernment, or more love.

**Question:**

**Application:** Our home church is too ignorant.

**Question:**

3. Select the points you want to focus on—usually 2 or 3 points unless your are going to compile a list together

List-compiling is a form of brain-storming where the group assembles a list of causes, possibilities, results, reasons, examples, etc. on a given topic. Brain-storming is highly engaging and encourages creative thought, but can be weak in instruction value

4. Determine which points could reasonably be discovered by the group during discussion, and which will need to be supplied by you, the leader. You may call on them to:

come up with everything from the theological points on

or you may supply the strategic thesis, and ask them for antitheses

or only ask them for application

or, in certain passages, even the background may be elicited in discussion (i.e. teaching them how to "use their eyes" in interpretation)

5. Prepare an introduction including the information needed to get going and something emotionally stirring. Could be a paradox, a passionate appeal, a challenge etc.
6. Prepare questions for each of the sections you plan to discuss. When preparing questions:

Consider Lowman's comment: To promote discussion, questions must give students permission to be wrong: cf. "How does the text define entropy?" or "what is the definition of existentialism?" vs. "What is your first association to the word entropy?" or "What does existentialism mean to you?" Pay attention to your wording.

After composing a question, imagine the group giving answers. Will they be able to answer? Would the answers be interesting? Remember, you know what answers you're after. Will they?

Is there any controversy or need for judgment in your question? Or are the answers too obvious? Avoid overly-simple questions.

Your questions may run several deep on each point. Usually, only the first is planned, along with your goal. Then keep probing with spontaneous questions until your goal is reached."

7. Prepare transitions between sections, and contingencies in case discussion lasts too long. Decide what you can jettison.
8. Prepare a conclusion

**If you are using a tape or realmedia presentation in preparation.**

1. Make sure you understand the passage. The speaker hopefully has done your inductive study for you, but you should check his/her work.
2. Identify the main burdens, or themes the speaker is focusing on. Which points do you agree with, and feel are needed in your group?
3. If the tape is from an hour long teaching, but you plan to teach home church, decide which points you are going to edit out.

4. Determine which points would lend themselves to discussion, and compose questions accordingly. Prepare to deliver the other points yourself.

**If you are planning to cover a narrative spread over numerous passages (i.e. not expository coverage of a specific narrative in one passage, like the life of David)**

1. Prepare your introduction
2. Prepare a list of passages to read, and plan on assigning these to readers in the group wherever appropriate. Will you analyze the story as you read it (section by section) or go through the whole story before analyzing what it means? (Passages too long to read or lacking immediate interest should be summarized by you)
3. Identify the themes you want to focus on and antitheses for each—will you call on them to discover the themes? Or will you supply the themes and call on them for antitheses and application?
4. Prepare contingencies for unexpected duration of discussion in various parts. What parts will you dispense with if the group wants to focus on fewer themes?
5. Prepare your conclusion

**If you are teaching a topic**

1. Study your topic and identify your main points, Scriptural backing for each, other evidence, antitheses for each, and illustrations.
2. Prepare an introduction
3. Decide what you are going to supply, and what you are going to call for, via discussion. Gauge the knowledge level of the group, including new people. Questions that seem too hard might intimidate new people. Questions that require specific answers may intimidate. But over-simplified questions seem like recitation. You may:
  - Give a general introduction and then try to lead them in discovery of your main points
  - Give an introduction and present a contradiction: Either two passages that seem to contradict, or two contradictory positions that you argue persuasively. Call on the group to resolve the conflict, either in favor of one or the other point, or with a new position.

- Give a general introduction and argue your main points. Then call on them for antitheses for each main point, considering what the implications for each are.
- Introduce and argue your main points. Then call for comparisons with similar or opposing views or with related issues
- Introduce and argue your main points. Then call on the group for illustrations, especially in their own experience

### Finishing Touches

1. Before God, what part of the plan really fires you with passion? Have you worked with this enough to develop a burden for your points? How are you going to let that passion fly?
2. Check your questions with someone who understands discussion. Have you accidentally included questions that are boring, hard to understand, or are recitation?
3. Are you familiar enough with your passage and subject to be flexible and relatively note-free? You can't engage people in discussion if you are looking at your notes all the time.
4. Have you prayed by yourself and with your group members that the Holy Spirit will energize the church for sharing?
5. Consider an audience plant: If you know someone in your group who has experience in the area you are discussing, why not call that person and say, "We're going to be discussing this area, and I wonder if you'd be willing to share about that time you..."
6. Consider audience preparation: Most home churches have an email group set up. Why not send out a message to the people before your meeting: "We're going to be studying such and so, and these are some questions to think about for discussion..."