

# 8 The Need for 8 Methods

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We want our spiritual “food” to taste good. We want to teach in such a way that the learner will be interested in what we are saying and will grow spiritually. That is why we need to use the right methods when we teach.

We have just seen that we have a wonderful message to share with the world. It is the most important message ever given. How we present it is also very important. Methods are not, in themselves, either spiritual or unspiritual. But they make it possible for us to teach spiritual truths so people of all ages can understand and accept them. Use the best methods when you teach these wonderful truths from God’s Word.

## ***The Plan***

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- A. You Need a Method
- B. Teaching Methods

## ***The Goals***

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1. Explain why teaching methods are needed.
2. Discuss various methods of teaching.

### **A. YOU NEED A METHOD**

**Goal 1.** Explain why teaching methods are needed.

Have you ever sat in a class without learning anything? Maybe the teacher had studied the lesson, but when the class was over, you did not know what he was trying to tell you. Or maybe what he said did not really interest you. Sometimes this happens if the teacher has not prepared the lesson well or if the teaching was not made relevant.

We have already studied how to prepare a message in our last lesson. But a poor outcome can be had if the right method is not used in preparing and presenting the message. Methods are “ways to present your message in an orderly arrangement of ideas and topics.” You need to know not only the message of the lesson, but also how you want to teach it. The message is what is taught. The method is how you present the message.

Using the right method will be important in your teaching ministry. Some people say that methods are not needed. They feel that if they just talk, the Holy Spirit will tell them what to say. Teaching which results in people growing spiritually is just not that easy. Anyone who tries to teach without using good methods will find out after a few years that those he or she has taught have not learned much of anything.

It is not against God’s plan to use teaching methods. Jesus used a number of different methods to teach both His disciples

and the crowds that followed Him. We will look at these examples in our next lesson.

One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to guide the Christian. If you will ask Him to, He will guide you in choosing methods that best present your lesson.

## ***Application***

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- 1** In teaching, the method we use is
    - a)** what we are trying to teach.
    - b)** the way we plan to teach a lesson.
    - c)** the same as the message.
  
  - 2** Good teaching methods are needed so teachers will
    - a)** feel satisfied with themselves.
    - b)** get through the lesson faster.
    - c)** see spiritual growth in students.
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## **B. TEACHING METHODS**

**Goal 2.** Discuss various methods of teaching.

Be aware of different methods used in teaching as you plan your message. Several methods may be used. In choosing which method to use, think about the ages of those you are teaching. Because children are different from adults in their learning abilities, you will need to choose different ways of teaching them. We will now look at four teaching methods. As we discuss them, think of how you could use them in your teaching ministry.

### **Give A Lecture**

A lecture is a planned speech or talk on a chosen subject given for the purpose of instructing. The lecture can be short or long and is best used with adults. Children have difficulty listening to a speaker for very long.

There are several reasons why a lecture is used.

1. It saves time. The teacher can present a lesson and give facts that would take students much longer to find out for themselves.
2. It keeps the teacher on the subject of the lesson. A complete lesson can be given without the students getting the teacher off onto another subject. This is important when presenting new truths or wanting students to learn one certain thing. The teacher will give only facts and ideas that apply to that one lesson.
3. It helps in teaching large groups. A lecture can be given to 100 people as easily as to 10 people. Other methods of teaching are harder to use with large groups.

Along with the good reasons for using the lecture, there are some things you will need to be careful about.

1. Because there is less opportunity for students to talk during a lecture, it must be kept very interesting. If students get bored or lose interest, they will not learn what is being taught. To learn, people need to be led into thinking for themselves. There are ways of doing this, even when lecturing. We will suggest some a little later in this lesson.
2. Even though the teacher will do most of the talking in a lecture, it is a good idea to give students an opportunity to ask questions or make comments along the way. Of course, these must pertain to the lesson to be acceptable.
3. Lecturing requires careful attention in how to present the truths of the message. Of course, this is also true of other methods of teaching. When lecturing, be sure the message reaches the learner's feelings as well as his or her mind.
4. Think about what is being said. It is important to speak clearly and loudly enough for everyone to hear.

If you choose to give a lecture, carefully plan how you will present your message. Outlining, or listing the order of your different topics, can do this. Then, follow the order of your

outline as you are teaching. For example, at the beginning of this lesson, I presented an outline of what we would study—*The Plan* and *The Goals*. We are studying in that same order.

Another thing that can be done to help students learn from the lecture is to give them a set of questions concerning what is being presented. Have them listen for the answers and write them down. At the close of the lecture, give students time to share their answers.

It is important that you get to know those you are teaching so you will know if they are growing spiritually. Remember, this is the goal of all Christian teaching—that people grow spiritually.

## Application

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**3** What is the best age group to teach by the lecture method?

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**4** In which of the following situations would the lecture method be a good way to teach? Circle the letter in front of your choices.

- a)** Several children have gathered around you, and you feel the leading of the Spirit to teach them.
  - b)** Twenty or thirty Christians have gathered together, and you want them to learn more about the life of Jesus.
  - c)** You and a friend are talking, and she asks how she can become a Christian.
  - d)** The school has asked you to speak at a meeting of the graduating students.
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## Tell A Story

Storytelling is one of the oldest ways to teach. Jesus was a master storyteller. His stories were interesting and full of action. He took these stories from everyday life, for they were about things people did and knew.

Children, teenagers, and adults all love to hear stories. You can bring truths to life in a story. The action holds the student's interest, and learning is increased. With young children the story often presents the whole lesson. With older children and adults, the story can be used in at least three ways:

1. At the beginning, to introduce the lesson
2. In the middle, to explain an idea that was given
3. Toward the end, to apply the message to everyday life.

Expressions such as love, faith, or being thankful are sometimes hard to explain. In a story they can be made clearer. What child would not be excited about listening to the story of Daniel in the lion's den? It is a story for all ages, explaining the meaning of faith in God who cares for His people.

In Christian teaching, though, stories should not be chosen just to please the learner. Every story Jesus told had a message because He was trying to teach His listeners. The stories we use in our teaching must also have a particular message. There are stories in the Bible that you can use to teach for growth in the learner's Christian life. Or find a story that applies to everyday life, as Jesus did. Maybe you can even find a story connected with a current news item.

In choosing a story, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Does the story teach the truth I want to use in this lesson?
2. Will this story have meaning for the age group I am teaching?
3. Is there action in this story? Are people doing something?
4. Will my students and I enjoy the story?

Before you tell the story, practice telling it aloud two or three times. If the story seems to come alive and have meaning to you, then it will also have meaning for your listeners.

## Application

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- 5** Choose the best answer given in parentheses, and write it in the blank space.
- a)** Jesus told stories to (please people/teach God’s truths)
  - b)** Storytelling is a good way to explain the idea of love because it gives (an example of love/many ideas)
  - c)** When teaching children, it is best to tell a story at the beginning of the lesson to get them to (learn faster/listen)
- 6** Develop a short lesson including a story on the subject of having faith. Use the story in one of the three ways we talked about.
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## Have A Discussion

Paul writes, “Anyone who receives instruction in the word must share all good things with his instructor” (Galatians 6:6). A good discussion can help the learner to act on the truths taught. A group I once led discussed for many weeks what it meant to be a Christian. We all knew of a family in a nearby neighborhood who was in need of help. The mother had been in the hospital, and the father could not work because he had heart trouble. We decided to act on the truths we had learned. So we took them a box of food and enjoyed our time of ministering to them.

Discussions are not just talking about something or arguing about what is taught. Discussion is the sharing of ideas and truths learned. A true discussion happens when everyone in the group tries to reach an understanding of a truth. This method of teaching is harder to use than any of the others. It will take careful preparation, and you will need to be ready to guide the learner’s thinking.

Several things are needed to make a good discussion:

1. The question or problem to be discussed must be clearly understood by everyone. The questions should not ask for one certain answer, which would limit the discussion.

2. The discussion must be a part of the lesson. It can take up the whole class time or just a small part.
3. It should be organized to help the learner feel free to share his or her thoughts.
4. Enough time must be allowed to complete the discussion. If the student is to learn from the discussion, it should be applied to his or her life.
5. There must be an honest desire of the learner to know the truth.
6. The leader must be careful not to criticize the comments of the student. Criticism will discourage learners and keep them from speaking out in the future.

It is also important to know that a discussion is best used with a small group. If there are more than 12 to 14 people in a class, it is hard to let everyone take part. A large class could be divided into smaller groups, though, with leaders prepared to discuss some part of the lesson. Many people enjoy talking. So if a discussion is used, it can help students to grow in their understanding of spiritual things.

### ***Application***

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**7** Name three things you think are most important to a good discussion.

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**8** Suppose you were to use a discussion to teach a message on faith. What are some questions that could start the discussion?

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## Ask Questions

The question-and-answer method is the best way to find out how learners are growing in their Christian life. Questions that ask for thoughtful answers will show you how well they are applying what has been taught. They can also help the learner become interested in learning more and in finding ways to apply new truths.

You were asked to write several questions for a discussion on faith. This was because questions are an important part of a discussion. You can guide the discussion through the use of questions. Three kinds of questions are useful to those who are teaching:

1. *The fact question.* This asks the person to state a fact learned in the lesson. This kind of question is important because we need to know the facts before we can apply them to our lives.
2. *The problem question.* This is a question about some problem that needs to be solved. You can guide the learner by asking questions that help him or her think of ways to resolve the problem.
3. *The application question.* This asks the learner to apply the message of the lesson to everyday life. The application question can be used to ask someone to believe in Jesus as his or her Savior. It asks the learner to act on what he or she has learned.

In your teaching ministry ask questions to find out how much those you are teaching know. They in turn will ask questions because they want to learn. A good time of learning will include questions by both the teacher and the learner.

## Application

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**9** Circle the letter before each true sentence.

- a)** In a discussion you can ask questions to find out what the learners are really thinking.
- b)** Questions are used to cause the learner to think about a truth learned.
- c)** A fact question asks the learner to apply the lesson to his or her life.
- d)** A good question can get the learner's interest started.

**10** Write a question covering each of the three kinds of questions mentioned. Use Galatians 6:6 as a basis.

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## **Check Your Answers**

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- 10** Your answer. You could use the following:
- (1)** What should we do as we are taught the Christian message? (fact)
  - (2)** Would it be correct then to say we all have a teaching ministry? (problem)
  - (3)** How can you as a learner act upon this? (application)
- 1 b)** the way we plan to teach the lesson.
- 9** a), b), and d) are true.
- 5 a)** teach God's truths.  
**b)** an example of love.  
**c)** listen.
- 2 c)** see spiritual growth in students.
- 8** Your answer. You might say: "What is faith? If faith is a gift of God, what can we do to get it? How necessary is faith?"
- 3** Adults
- 7** (1) Asking a clear question that will be discussed, (2) keeping the discussion organized and moving, and (3) getting everyone involved in some way
- 4 b)** and **d)** are correct.
- 6** Your answer. One example would be to tell the story in Matthew 13:31–32 about the mustard seed. This story could be used in any of the three ways.

