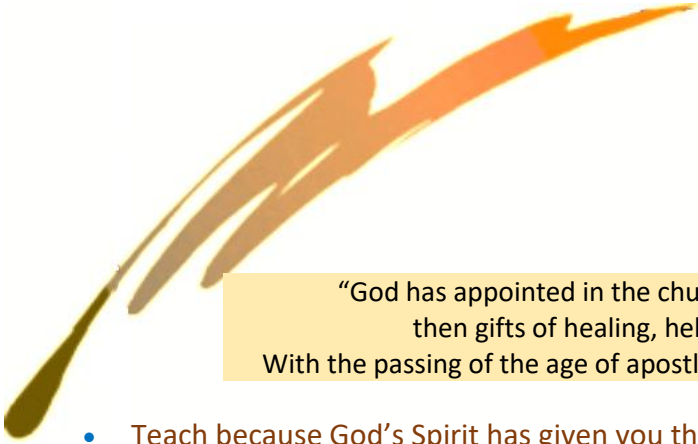




Adult Sunday School – Guidelines for Teachers

As we adopt an elective format for adults beginning in 2014, we want our teachers to follow the guidelines set forth here.

“God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues.” (1 Cor 12:28)
With the passing of the age of apostles and prophets, teachers are of prime importance to God today.

- **Teach because God’s Spirit has given you the gift of teaching and calls you to use it**

We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us...If your gift is teaching, then teach. (Ro 12:6-7) Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others. (1 Pet 4:10) Fan into flame the gift of God. (2 Tim 1:6)

- There are various reasons people like to teach. Skilled orators are often recognized and praised. Great teachers are admired and appreciated. These should not be your motivation for teaching. You are to be a servant to your students. You should be “playing to an audience of One.” If you happen to be told you’ve taught a great class, don’t dismiss it as if fishing for another compliment. A mere thank you or “Praise the Lord” is appropriate.
- Gifted people generally find it amazingly easy to do what they are gifted at; observers may say they are *natural* at it. When you are *in-flow* using your gift, hours fly by. You can accomplish in minutes what others take hours to do, if at all. Your work might be considered a masterpiece in some sense. If course development, class preparation and classroom delivery are major challenges for you, then you either need to “fan the flame” and get more training and experience in it, or you need to re-assess if teaching is really your spiritual gift. Not all are teachers in Christ’s body.

- **Teach because you love God & love your students**

If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. (1 Cor 13:1) And walk in love, as Christ loved us. (Eph 5:2) Through love serve one another. (Gal 5:13) Let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. (Gal 6:10)

- We must be motivated to teach others because of our love for God and his people, and because we desire to see them walk worthy of the calling that God has called them.
- Sometimes we’ll have students who challenge us or whom we’d honestly not prefer to have in the class. We still need Christ’s love to radiate through us and to warm that person’s heart. As teachers who are called to a higher standard, we must be Christ’s ambassadors and treat others as we would be treated.

- **Be truly humble and teach out of that attitude**

In humility count others more significant than yourselves. (Phil 2:3) He must increase, but I must decrease. (Jo 3:30) Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight. (Ro 12:16) Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you. (1 Pet 5:5-6)

- You cannot fake humility before others. A proud teacher claiming to speak for the meek and lowly Jesus is a sham, and will do nothing but damage. Before you accept any assignment to teach God’s people, first humble yourself before God’s mighty hand. Remember the warning in Hebrews 10:31 “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”
- We need to carefully preach/teach the clear Word of God authoritatively while holding our own interpretations loosely. We see through a mirror dimly, our thoughts are not God’s thoughts, and we are not to think more highly of ourselves than we ought.
- Romans 14:1 discusses the disputable matters in life and says “As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions.” Further, Romans 14:12-13 tells us: “each of us will give an account of himself to God. Therefore let us not pass judgment on one another.” When we teach, we are not to compel others to interpret Scripture the way that we do – that is legalism which is unscriptural.

- **Be authentic**

It is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher. (Matt 10:25)

- Jesus spoke with authority (Mark 1). He could do that because he only spoke what he was led to. Same with us – if the Spirit is leading us as we teach, we can speak with authority also. No more bland teaching with a “take it or leave it” attitude. People need to be challenged to reach new personal records. They need teachers who say “follow me as I follow Christ.” We, as teachers, are held to a higher standard, and we need to live up to that so our message rings with conviction and integrity.
- However, we do hold this treasure in jars of clay. We are not fully mature; we are in the ongoing struggle of working out our salvation with fear and trembling. To speak with authority when we are hurting people requires authenticity. It is important to understand this, that: *It is not hypocritical to call people to obey Scriptural commands that we haven’t yet mastered, as long as we humbly admit that we are “preaching to ourselves also.”*

- **Tell stories**

I speak to them in parables, because ... hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. (Matt 10:25)

- People remember stories. It is said that illustrations are windows to the soul. An effective way to encourage others to follow you as you follow Christ is to tell stories of your successes; An effective way to be authentic is to tell stories of your failures. Both are critical in an appropriate balance.
- However, always keep in mind that it’s all about Christ, not about you. And a special note to grandfathers: no stories of the grandkids – it’s not about them either.

- **Present practical training that is geared toward equipping students to every good work**

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them. (Eph 2:10) But be doers of the word, and not hearers only. (Ja 1:22)

- Teaching is intended to make a difference in people’s lives; it’s not just for informational purposes. It is to encourage them to grow and to be doers of the word, not hearers only. Before you complete preparation for any lesson, make sure you ask yourself the *so-what* question – why do your students need to hear this? how are they supposed to react to this?
- Be sure to give them time during the hour to process the information and to think through how they need to respond to the material. Assuming they will process it afterward is wishful thinking, an attitude that has proven ineffective and is no longer acceptable. Our teachers will have higher expectations of their students than we have traditionally had. Our students are Christian adults who are commanded by the Lord to discipline themselves. We expect them to have a serious approach to their training.
- Although it may cut your actual teaching time in half (or more), you must plan student interaction into your training. Students remember what they do much more than what they hear. So, involve them in numerous ways: ask them questions, use small group discussions, or invite their opinions on other people’s questions. Since our students are fellow believers who have been taught by the Spirit themselves, we must respect their knowledge and experience. Our teaching style must clearly demonstrate a genuine intent of learning from them as they learn from us.

- **Manage the class logistics**

But all things should be done decently and in order. (1 Cor 14:40).

- Breaking from our traditions of the past, we want to start and end each of our classes on time. We have only 55 minutes and with student interaction built in, that’s not much time. We want the classes to be run professionally by using a class host/hostess. This person will start the class promptly, welcome the students, remind them what the class is about or did last week, and introduce the teacher(s).
- When possible the class should use a team teaching approach to bring multiple perspectives as well as a variety of style and voice. If one of the teachers is being mentored by the more experienced teacher, there ought to be focused, intentional debriefing times outside of class, where potential improvements are discussed – both should make suggestions for the other.
- When appropriate use technology and media to enhance your message. And be diligent in your research by looking up your topic in this *tremendously valuable* website: gracetabernacle.org/GraceQuotes.

I exhort the elders [and teachers] among you...shepherd the flock of God...not under compulsion, but willingly...eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. (1 Pet 5:1-4)

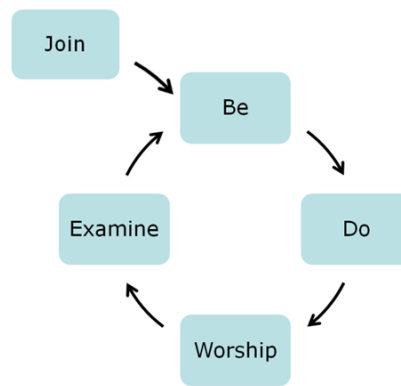
Part 2. Striving for unity while respecting diversity.

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Cor 12:4-7).

- A “big picture” of Christianity

I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole counsel of God. (Acts 20:27)

- Scripture gives us many commands and challenges. When we teach or challenge others, we need to keep the big picture or the “whole counsel of God” in mind. We may have our particular passions, be it worship, missions, evangelism, discipleship, etc. but we ought not to assume everyone has the same gift or passion as us. Christ’s body has a variety of gifts that we need to respect.

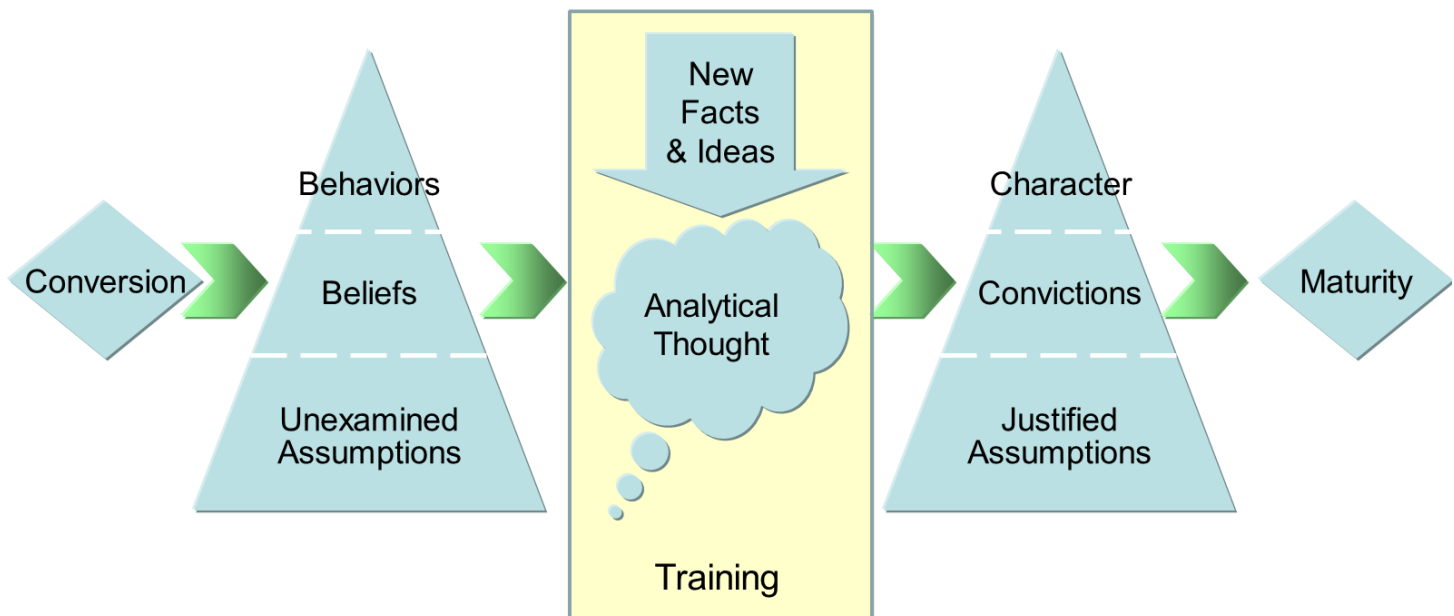


Step	Name	Goal	Evidence	Some Components
Join	Conversion/ Justification	Follow Christ	Repentance	• Be baptized • Join church
Be	Sanctification	Conform to Christ	Fruit of the Spirit	• Abide in Christ • Seek ye first • Commitment • Contentment • Love God & others
Do	Service	Act like Christ	Spiritual Gifts	• Equip for good works • Stir up the gift... • Serve the church • Seek the lost • Be salt & light • Cultural mandate • Tear down strongholds
Worship	Thanksgiving	Submit to Christ	Self- Sacrifice	• Praise the Lord • Sing a new song • Communion
Examine	Discipline	Grow in Grace	Holiness; Maturity	• Study the Word • Meditation • Add to your faith...

- A “big picture” of training and Christian maturity

Be transformed by the renewal of your mind. (Rom 12:2)

- God uses many methods to bring us to maturity, including new experiences, discipline, suffering, counsel of fellow believers, mentoring, and training. This picture is a model how training can lead to maturity:



- We all need to be transformed by the renewing of our minds – by our way of thinking. What we assume to be true and what we believe to be true determines our behavior. Faulty assumptions or beliefs will lead to inappropriate, immature or harmful behaviors. New believers, like all of us in some areas of our thinking, haven’t given sufficient analytical thought to these things. Training provides the opportunity to do this.
- Assumptions are foundational to successful living, yet most people fail to examine the validity of theirs. When we teach, we need to give students the chance to identify their assumptions, consider the rationale behind them and re-build their thinking on justified assumptions. As an example, Protestant churches make an assumption that the written Scriptures represent the complete Word of God, while the Catholic church holds that Sacred Tradition is also the Word of God to be treated with equal veneration. Can we justify our assumption of *sola scriptura*?
- Beliefs are things we think are true. But we often change our beliefs as we encounter new facts, data and experiences. Convictions, on the other hand, are things we are convinced are true to the core of our soul, and we will not going to change our convictions very easily. Ephesians 4:14 describes convictions this way: “so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes.”
- Behavior is how we act—character is who we really are. Tyron Edwards wrote “Thoughts lead on to purposes; purposes go forth in action; actions form habits; habits decide character; and character fixes our destiny.” As we mold our character in one area of life after another we build a maturity that God demands and deserves. May our teaching assist our students to that noble goal.

I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called. (Eph 4:1)
As he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct. (1 Pet 1:15)