

Creating Content

Helpful hints in writing Bibles Studies:

1. It is very easy to write application questions instead of interpretation questions. Be careful not to apply it to your life before finding out what it meant to its original audience.
2. Choose a text of about 5-15 verses, depending on how long you want your Bible study to go. For a short study, 15-20 minutes, you will need around 4 to 5 of each type of question (except application questions--only a few of those probably). For longer studies you will need more questions. I would rather have too many and edit on the fly than not have enough.
3. Make sure you understand what you are asking. If you don't understand what you are asking, the hearers definitely won't understand!

Communicating the Content

1. Listening: We need to be attentive, active listeners. Being a good listener is an art and is as important as any other form of communication. Remember the importance of body posture.
2. Seeking information and opinions: Call out people by name and ask for information or their opinion. Ask members who may tend to be quiet.
3. Clarifying: When the meaning of what has been said is vague, clarification is needed. Example: "I am not sure what you meant. Could you please restate that?"
4. Paraphrasing: Part of active listening. Listeners restate the speaker's thoughts in their own words. Example: "What I heard you saying is.... Is that it?" "Mark, your central concern is..." "David, your reaction seems to be..."
5. Justifying: This involves asking people to give reasons for what they said, and should be done in a positive, non-argumentative way. Example: "Where do you find that in the passage we are studying?"
6. Re-directing: When a group member continues to address all his questions and comments to the leader rather than the group, use redirecting. Example: "Tom, what do you think about Mike's last question?" "How would you answer that, Tom?"
7. Extending: This involves expanding a line of thought in a discussion. Example: "Does anyone have anything they would like to add to what has been said?"
8. Summarizing: At various points in a group discussion, it is helpful to briefly summarize and highlight what has been said.
9. Affirming: This is HUGE. It is always important to recognize and affirm the person who is talking. You might say "Thank you for that comment." "That is an interesting point." Never come out and say that is wrong... but be affirming and gentle in offering correction. Affirm the person before you offer any _____.
10. Being concrete and personal: Use "I" messages instead of "you" messages. To say "I feel" or "I think" is much more direct and helpful than "Some people think" or "some people believe."

11. Being personally implicated: Ask questions like “What is your opinion about that?” “How does that personally affect you?” “How does that make you feel?” “Have you ever struggled with this issue yourself?” “How does this scripture affect my daily life?” DO NOT ask Yes or No questions.
12. Handling talkative and silent members: For talkative members use non-verbal communication. Don’t let them sit right across from you but instead maybe next to you. Limit eye contact and when they pause, break in and regain the floor. For silent members do the opposite. Make frequent eye contact, have them sit across from you. Call on them to answer a question you present to the group, do not be afraid to use names, “Jason, how does that apply to your life?”