

THE
DISCIPLESHIP
PLACE

Jesus the Master Teacher



SESSION 14

How Do You Teach?
Close with Hope, Grace, and a Time of Reflection

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How Do You Teach? Close with Hope, Grace, and a Time of Reflection

SESSION OVERVIEW

Why Is Reflection for Teachers and Learners Important?

How Should You Close Your Lesson?

**How Did Jesus Close His Life Lesson?
An Example**

Application

Exam

Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant

LEARNER OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, you should be able to:

- Define reflective teaching and learning
- Identify closing activities that address reflections, God's grace, and hope
- Analyze Jesus' closing and his use of reflections, hope, and grace

How Do You Teach? Close with Hope, Grace, and a Time of Reflection

INTRODUCTION

JOURNALING

Think about a time that you have taught a lesson. It could be with one student or a whole class of students. It could be with adults or children. It could also be with your child or another person who you have mentored. Whatever the case, reflect on your lesson or lessons. Record your reflections on the effectiveness of your lesson BEFORE you begin this session. (In your application questions at the end of this session, you will record your teaching reflections again AFTER you read the session and then compare the differences between the two reflections.)

A MOTLEY CREW

It was the last night of the 10-week parenting class, and as a celebration of our time together, I was treating all 10 participants to a dinner *without* their kids being present. It had been an interesting group. As is normal, I am sure I learned more than anyone in the class. Attendance had been sporadic; average attendance was five with a high of seven and a low of three. However, this evening all 10 parents were present.

Indeed, we were a motley group. As we walked into the restaurant, we were escorted to the “reserved” table in the back of the very crowded restaurant. For the first time, I saw our group through the lenses of the people in the restaurant. Each of us was very unique, different clothing from holey sweatshirts to dress jackets, long and short beards, hair in many colors, diverse cultural backgrounds, crutches, canes, people from ages 20 to 70, reserved and gregarious personalities, and a variety of physical shapes and sizes. All in all, quite a crew!

As we enjoyed each other’s company, I had a moment to reflect on these beautiful people. Jenny and Aden came from a background of families who never went through the ceremony of being married. After they were saved and baptized, they made a decision to be married. Our church had recently thrown them a wedding as we all celebrated with them and their two children. Every week, their life was changing dramatically and despite many difficulties, they were growing in grace. Mike and Jessy came from a background of drugs and alcohol. After many struggles, they are now raising their boys to be men of character, and both of them are involved in different ministries in

our church. Lavita and Vernon are grandparents of an extended family. They entered our church with great hurts; however, their smiles and acceptance have grown dramatically. They are the kind of people who will do anything to help others; they share their expertise of handling many situations with all of us. Dana and Jerry are consistent followers of Christ. Both of them have modeled for all of us what it means to be deeply committed as husband and wife. They have shared their rocky path and have illustrated God's grace and forgiveness in beautiful ways. Finally, there are Chet and I, two people who have been married for 35 years, one diagnosed with Alzheimer's and one that is just "a bit crazy." I hope we are illustrating God's grace; Chet does it quietly, usually sitting in his chair, while I express it loudly and actively.

What has brought us all together? God's grace! As I reflect on how God has worked in this motley crew, God reminded me that He thinks of all of us (me included) with hope and grace and reflects on the progress that we (me included) are making. Yes, as students in a parenting class, we had learned some characteristics of Godly parents. Yes, we have a new respect for our different journeys as parents. Yes, we acknowledge that we all have different struggles and strengths, but our respect for each other has grown over time. Yes, and most importantly, all of us reflect that we are growing in grace and that none of us are done growing. God's grace is the most important factor in our growth.

WHY IS REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS AND LEARNERS IMPORTANT?

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As a teacher educator by profession, I have often had to assess teachers' effectiveness by observing their lessons, their questioning and response skills, their use of technology, or their content presentations. I have found those assessments to be easy to analyze and not as easy to share for evaluation purposes. With that said, reflecting on my own teaching is not an easy or quick task. In my opinion, to be the best teacher possible, all these are absolutely necessary!

Reflective teaching is a self-awareness tool that can help you continually modify your teaching for the benefit of both your students and you. Defined as "asking what and why" questions along with the lesser questions of "how and where," teacher reflection requires that you step back from a lesson and ask yourself some questions about your teaching.

- What did I teach today? Was it what I intended? Was it what God intended for today? Was I listening to others' needs?
- Why did I focus on _____? Was it part of a sequence of lessons? Was it connected to other lessons or was it an isolated event? Did it connect to God's purpose for our group? Did I study the scripture thoroughly before teaching this lesson? Why did this lesson appear to go well? Why did it not go well?
- How did I begin the lesson? Did I use good questions? Did I listen to my students . . . really listen to their ideas? How did I respond to criticisms? How did I organize the lesson? Did I use a variety of materials? Did I facilitate good interactions and discussions?
- Where did I use Scripture? Where did I use an illustration? Where did I involve others? Where did I use technology effectively?

Please know that reflective teaching can be a quiet, private event and one that, unlike professional teaching, is not evaluated for promotion or monetary gain. Most of my reflections are just between God and me, and those are the most important and revealing. I have been fortunate that most of my adult students have been quite positive and often comment, "Good lesson!" or "I got a lot out of the lesson today" or "I wish we had more time today." Reflective teaching can also be facilitated by another adult teacher or student. I have been privileged to team-teach with talented teachers in my Bible study groups. After finishing a lesson, we


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were able to laugh (or cry) or share observations about our session and talk about ways we could improve our teaching. Or, when I need specific feedback about a lesson technique or study that I have used, I have asked a perceptive student to inform my reflection. However you decide to reflect on your teaching, please know that it is a powerful tool for effective teaching. Research demonstrates that experience alone is not sufficient for growth as a teacher. However, experience coupled with reflection and modifications has great potential as an impetus for teaching improvement for all of us.

Reflective learning by students in your Bible study group is equally important and something that should be emphasized as part of the conclusion in each of your lessons. One of my favorite pastors recently told me that he thought that most of the counseling issues revolved around a lack of self-awareness by all participants. Certainly, reflective learning can increase self-awareness. Learning and understanding biblical concepts (see Session 4) requires that students connect new learning to past learning. In other words, if experiences are isolated events, they cannot remember their learning or apply it to their daily life. One of my favorite definitions of reflective learning comes from an education book entitled, *Learning and Leading with Habits of Mind* (Costa and Kallik, 2008).

“Reflection involves linking a current experience to previous learning. Reflection also involves drawing forth cognitive and emotional information from several sources: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile. To reflect, we must act upon and process the information, synthesizing and evaluating the data. In the end, reflecting also means applying what we’ve learned to contexts beyond the original situations in which we learned something.” (pg. 221-222, Costa and Kallik, “Chapter 12, Learning Through Reflection” eds, ASCD, Alexandria, VA., pg. 221-222, 2008).

I believe that description of reflective learning is the type of learning I want my Bible study students to experience. I want them to link the studied scripture to their daily life, to their emotions and their intellect, to act upon the scripture as they process it, and apply the scripture to the lives of biblical characters AND especially to their own lives.

So how do you encourage reflective learning? Generally, reflective learning requires that students “mentally wander through” the recently finished lesson, connect their past with the scripture, and make sense of what they discover in the process. Students can be prompted to reflect on their learning with questions or simple tasks. Sample questions or tasks include:



1. What part of the scripture was most meaningful to you today? Share it with someone sitting next to you.
2. What was the most important idea that you heard today? Write it down.
3. Because of this session, I will STOP doing . . .
4. Because of this session, I will CONTINUE doing . . .
5. Because of this session, I will START doing . . .
6. What don't I understand about this lesson? Tell the teacher and ask for resources.
7. How is God speaking to you through this lesson? Pray and tell Him. Listen as well as talk!
8. How would you summarize today's lesson for someone who wasn't here? How did it relate to your past experiences?

Please note: If you have completed all the activities in the sessions, you have been doing reflective learning tasks as you answer the journal questions at the end of each session.

HOW SHOULD YOU CLOSE YOUR LESSON?

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Teachers expect their students to remember lessons that are being taught. Good closure activities are often called “making that last impression,” and if used effectively, they can help students remember important lessons. In most cases, your students will only see you once a week. You want them to remember what they have been taught for longer than the time spent in class, so you need to always do some type of closure (By the way, some students don’t remember anything about the lesson *during* the lesson and nothing *after* the lesson, but remember that you are just in charge of obeying God. He’s in charge of the results!). So, how should you close your lesson? Here are some suggestions.

- Reflection questions or activities (See the prior section). These can be short or long; silent, oral or written; long-ago past or the recent past. Whatever the situation, reflection should be part of every closing.
- Giving of a blessing. My daughter and pastor (Mulder, 2016) recently wrote an article for *Holiness Today* entitled “What Does It Mean to Be Blessed?” She outlined two characteristics that complete the sentence stem, “We are blessed when . . . 1) we surrender our circumstances, and 2) we need God’s presence.” This idea of a blessing directly connects to the subtitle of this lesson, “Close with Hope, Grace, and a Time of Reflection.” I love to pray a blessing on each of the students in my classes in closing. I pray that they surrender to God’s will and direction with those circumstances that they cannot change. In addition, I pray that they acknowledge their need for God’s presence and grace, which is a blessing that can’t be contained!!
- Finally, remind them of the hope that we have in God. Reflection activities are mainly connecting the past with the present. A hopeful perspective involves the future... and most importantly, a hope that is “built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness.” We sometimes conclude singing a song of hope, *The Solid Rock*, and I love to include an original verse that is normally not included in most hymnals.

*When darkness seems to hide His face,
I rest on His unchanging grace,
In every high and stormy gale,
My anchor holds within the veil.*

 NOTES

*His oath His covenant, His blood,
Support me in the whelming flood,
When all around my soul gives way,
He then is all my Hope and Stay*

*I trust His righteous character;
His council, promise, and His power;
His honor and His Name's at stake
To save me from the burning lake;*

*On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand,
All other ground is sinking sand. (Mote, Edward, 1834)*

HOW DID JESUS CLOSE HIS LIFE LESSON? AN EXAMPLE



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In Acts 1:1-11, Luke records Jesus' final days on this earth. As you read the NIV version below, think about the reflections He made, the grace He conveyed, and the hope He promised. My words can't improve or expand it in anyway. Just read and enjoy!

¹ In my former book, *Theophilus*, I wrote about all that Jesus began to do and to teach ² until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. ³ After his suffering, he presented himself to them and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God. ⁴ On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: "Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. ⁵ For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit."

⁶ Then they gathered around him and asked him, "Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?"

⁷ He said to them: "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. ⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

⁹ After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight.

¹⁰ They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ¹¹ "Men of Galilee," they said, "why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

CLOSING THOUGHT

It takes time and preparation to think through a lesson and decide how to conclude the lesson so that students can leave with fresh perspectives. I have purposely tried to list everything that I have ever done as a closing. However, please be reminded that it is not practically possible for any of us to implement all the strategies listed here. Instead, choose those ideas that fit with your lesson's context. Do your best to close every lesson with grace, hope, and reflection in



some way. I continue to remind myself that God is in charge of the lesson and I am just His servant . . . or as I frequently quote, “I am just in charge of obeying. He is in charge of the results!”

APPLICATION



NOTES

Be prepared to share your three application activities with your mentor.

1. Select a Bible study lesson you have recently taught. Reflect on your teaching or add to your journal reflections that are outlined above.
2. Identify at least three closing ideas that you will use as you teach adults. Try out at least one of them in a lesson, OR (if you don't have a class yet) observe another adult class and identify any closing ideas they select. Observe and note the effectiveness of the closing.
3. Analyze Acts 1:1-11. Record at least 10 phrases or words that Jesus uses to ask His followers to reflect on what they have learned. Also, list Jesus' ideas or words that show His grace and/or the hope they (and we) have in Him.

JOURNALING

Consider some of the following when journaling:

- One idea, Bible verse, or story that made an impression on me today was . . .
- A new idea I encountered today is . . .
- One thing that made me uncomfortable today was . . .
- The prayer I most want to pray right now is . . .

EXAM

**NOTES**

1. The lesson's author reflected on when a "motley crew" shared dinner. What was the unifying element that surfaced in the author's reflections?
 - A. They all were successful in their own right.
 - B. God's grace was evident in their stories of transformation.
 - C. The small group lessons on marriage kept them unified.
 - D. All of the above
2. Reflective teaching is a self-awareness tool that can help you continually modify your teaching for the benefit of both your students and you.
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. Self-awareness is not a critical part of the learning process for the students because self-awareness is not a spiritual concern.
 - A. True
 - B. False
4. Reflection involves linking a current experience to previous learning and involves drawing from cognitive and emotional information.
 - A. True
 - B. False
5. An effective way to close a lesson is by using reflection questions or activities.
 - A. True
 - B. False

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MENTOR AND PARTICIPANT



NOTES

Be prepared to discuss the following with your mentor.

1. Give your mentor, the answers to application activities 1 and 3. Discuss briefly any part of the answers that you want to share or any answers that your mentor wants to discuss.
2. Discuss in detail the closings you suggested in application activity 2. Analyze the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of specific closings and any observations or experiences you have had regarding lesson closings that you have used or observed.