

THE  
DISCIPLESHIP  
PLACE

Jesus the Master Teacher



**SESSION 12**

How Do You Teach?  
Listen to Adults and Use Their Responses

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# How Do You Teach? Listen to Adults and Use Their Responses

## SESSION OVERVIEW

**What is Active Listening?**

**How Do You Provide Feedback?**

**How Did Jesus Listen?  
An Example**

**Application**

**Exam**

**Discussion Guide for Mentor and Participant**

## LEARNER OBJECTIVES

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

- Define and apply active listening methods
- List the responses of a facilitator during a group discussion and connect it to feedback suggestions
- Analyze the responses that Jesus used when reacting to the questions, answers, or comments of His disciples.

# How Do You Teach? Facilitate Discussions and Ask Questions



## INTRODUCTION

### JOURNALING

Reflect on the spiritual questions that you personally have had and how God (and others) have responded to your questions. Then, think about the spiritual discussions that you have had with God (and others). As you read through this session, think about how your questions and discussions have helped you draw closer to God. How could spiritual questions and discussions be helpful to others and their spiritual journey? Record your thoughts about your use of questions and discussions and see if there are any connections to the way Jesus taught.

### QUESTIONS . . . QUESTIONS . . . QUESTIONS

I have spent my life asking questions. Because I like math that makes sense, I often asked my teachers why a particular procedure worked (e.g., to divide fractions, you “invert and multiply”) even though most of the time I have been told to just memorize it (e.g., “don’t ask the reason why!”). Or, why didn’t that science experiment work as expected? What variable did I not control? Did I collect the data well? What did I miss? Now, as an adult, my idea of sense-making has continued to plague me as I work with technology every day. Why did my computer do that? Why won’t it print? How can it be fixed? What happened to my document? Why can’t I find that program? Why won’t that connector work? What in the world is “the cloud” and how can I find it? The questions (along with my search for answers) go on and on.

My questioning personality has continued to my spiritual life. Fortunately, I have not always verbally shared my questions with others, and unfortunately, I haven’t even discussed them with God. How silly of me! Of course, He knew where I was struggling; I remember the many times I confessed my questions and how He answered me in love. Fortunately, we serve a God who understands our questions, and while we may not like the answers or they don’t come quickly enough or we fail to hear them, He really wants to talk to us. Isn’t it amazing that the God of all creation wants to have fellowship with us?

As I matured, my spiritual questions have changed over the years. I no longer worry that God doesn't want to hear them. I also don't share them with everyone; instead, I primarily talk with God and do my best to listen to His answers. When my daughter was born two months early and we both were in critical condition, I asked, "What did I do wrong? Why was God punishing me?" Then, I proceeded to "discuss" with God about my record at a Christian college, my weekly tithe, and my dedication to church and family. When my dad died at 56 after being a faithful minister of the Word for 36 years, I questioned God, "Why didn't you heal his heart like you did Bobby Hoots' heart? They were both evangelists! If you could do it for his heart, why not my dad's?" I remember many "discussions" with God where I tried (in vain) to convince God that He had made a mistake because my dad was a really good preacher. (Like God didn't know that!) When a church blamed me for the transgressions of someone else, I asked, "Why me? What could I have done differently? Why don't they remember how I loved them?" When my husband of more than 30 years developed four types of cancer and then was diagnosed with Alzheimer's, I asked, "Why him God? He has been involved in missions and cares deeply for others." And then I asked, "Why me God? I am not a good caregiver!" I then began a discussion with God about my non-caregiving spirit and reminded Him that He made me as someone who didn't like hospitals, someone who was a terrible counselor, and in addition, I didn't have any caregiving characteristics! Now, I smile when I imagine God shaking His head at my complaints and my self-centeredness. Of course, He knows me and He cares for my husband more than I ever could!

Recently, my devotions included some sections in Job 38:1-7. God spoke directly to me through His words, "Then the Lord spoke to Job out of the storm. He said: 'Who is this that obscures my plans with words **without knowledge?** Brace yourself (**NITA**), **I will question you, and you shall answer me.** Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? **Surely you know!** Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone—while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy.'" Wow! God really made me reflect on my questions. The next day I read in Job 42:1-6 and repeated with Job as he answered God, "**I know that you can do all things;** no purpose of yours can be thwarted. You asked, 'Who is this that obscures my plans without knowledge? Surely **I spoke of things I did not understand, that were too wonderful for me to know.** You said, 'Listen now and I will speak; I will question you, and you shall answer me.' **My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you.** Therefore **I despise myself and repent** in dust and ashes.'"

Yes, I questioned God and I freely acknowledge that I often spoke of things I did not understand! I am so glad and amazed that the God I serve did not mind my questions and that He wanted to talk to me! Yes, I will always have questions, but I will continue to repent of my selfish questions and my untrusting spirit. I always want to be aware of God's loving presence and His plans as I seek His face!

So, what do my spiritual questions have to do with the questions you ask during Bible studies? As a teacher, I want to prompt students to think about the questions that matter the most to them. Some of their questions are similar to mine. Some of the questions I ask them have answers that are similar to the ones God told me. Some of the questions I ask about the scripture, prompts their understanding as different students give their responses. Some of the questions I ask also help them look at the scripture from a deeper perspective than just simply restating the story. Whatever the case, questions are often the impetus for learning and thinking. Discussions about the Scripture, spiritual matters, the attributes of God, and our struggles can be activities that draw us all closer to God. Questions that you ask as a teacher can prompt thinking and sharing of our experiences as we study God's Word.

## WHAT TYPES OF QUESTIONS DO YOU ASK?

### NOTES

Educational research has traditionally labeled six different levels of questions for learners (Bloom, 1956, <https://www.bloomstaxonomy.org/Blooms%20Taxonomy%20questions.pdf>). Certainly, there are many ways of looking at questions, but for our purposes, this taxonomy helps us analyze our questions from lower to higher levels of cognitive thinking. The six levels of questions have been renamed over the years and combined in different ways, but they are still relevant when we look at questions that we should be asking. I have chosen to use the following taxonomy beginning at the lowest level and ending at the highest level of thinking.

- Level ONE: Remembering (formerly called knowledge)  
Questions at this level require students to find or remember information.
- Level TWO: Understanding (formerly called comprehension)  
Questions at this level require students to make sense out of information and understand.
- Level THREE: Applying (formerly called application)  
Questions at this level require students to use information in a new (but similar) situation.
- Level FOUR: Creating (formerly called synthesis) and Evaluating (formerly called evaluation) and Analyzing (formerly called analysis)  
NOTE: Previously, these last three were ordered as 4) analysis, 5) synthesis, and 6) evaluation; however, in later years, most educators consider all three to require higher levels of cognitive thinking. Creating questions require learners to use information to create something new. Evaluating questions require learners to critically examine information and make judgments. Analyzing questions require learners to take information apart and explore relationships.

The following chart illustrates each question type, useful verbs, and sample questions from a Bible study lesson. The lesson is entitled, "Our Missionary God" from a study entitled Mission Essentials: A Guide for Experiencing God's Mission in Your Life, published by The House Studio, Kansas City, MO in 2012. The questions within the lesson are excellent; I have repeated and categorized each question as I would use it. The specific scripture passages are from Isaiah 6:1-8, Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:18-19, and John 20:21.

**NOTES**

Question Type	Useful Verbs	Sample Questions
<b>Remembering</b>	describe, locate, list, name, memorize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are some attributes of God that you remember?</li> <li>• Read the passages in Isaiah and Luke. What specifically did Isaiah say he was sent to do?</li> <li>• Read John 20:21. Who is the sender in this passage? Who is Jesus sending in this passage?</li> </ul>
<b>Understanding</b>	interpret, summarize, paraphrase, explain, restate, outline,	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpret Isaiah's response to God's question in Isaiah 6:1-8. What does it mean?</li> <li>• Based on the scripture, summarize what God is saying about mission.</li> <li>• What is the difference between sending and being sent?</li> </ul>
<b>Applying</b>	use, show, apply, illustrate, draw, make a chart	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply Isaiah 6 to your life. How does God ask this question today?</li> <li>• How does this lesson influence the way you think about your own life?</li> </ul>
<b>Creating</b>	design, plan, produce, invent, devise, build	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devise a plan for your life that includes areas in your life that may need to change for you to say, "Here am I. Send me!"</li> <li>• If you were a member of the church board or planning committee, what suggestions would you make to plan for a missional church that is sending?</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluating</b>	judge, test, critique, defend, justify, choose, recommend, prioritize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review Hunsberger's three views of the church (i.e., Reformation Heritage, Contemporary Variation, and Missionary Vision). Which of the three views are most like the church today? Which of the three views are most like your view of the church? Explain your reasoning.</li> <li>• What hindrances are there to the sending mission of the church? What justifications do we provide for not having a sending mission? How would you counter those justifications?</li> </ul>

 **NOTES**

<b>Analyzing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyze Jesus' words to His disciples and the Isaiah passage. What are the similarities and what are the differences between the two passages?</li> <li>• Relate the characteristics of the church you grew up in with Hunsberger's three views. Where does your "old" church fit?</li> </ul>
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Please know that I am not proposing that you always ask questions from each level in every Bible study. Instead, I want you to think about (and write down as you prepare your lesson) using some questions that require more than just a repetition of facts or information. As a teacher, we want our students to think about the scripture, to apply and digest its meaning, to examine their beliefs, and to choose the way of righteousness. Good questions at all levels can prompt students to think deeper than simple answers.



## HOW DO YOU FACILITATE DISCUSSIONS?



### NOTES

Effective teaching is more than an interesting lecture, an informative speech, or a visual presentation. An effective teacher involves the learner by facilitating discussions. A discussion is more than an exchange of ideas between participants; an argument is also an exchange of ideas. Robert Quillen, an American journalist and humorist clarified the difference between discussion and argument, “Discussion is an exchange of knowledge; argument an exchange of ignorance.” Please know that I do not advocate arguing or “exchanging ignorance” in a Bible study; however, I do want to facilitate discussions. To exchange knowledge, it is important that questions are asked, answers or ideas are listened to with a Christlike spirit, and openness to responses are encouraged. In this next section, I want to share several strategies that I have learned, strategies that sometimes work!

Wait Time: As a teacher, I have spent too much time talking and not enough time listening. Similar to other teachers, I traditionally wait about a second before getting an answer to any question I ask. This is contrary to educational research that strongly supports a questioning strategy entitled, “Wait Time.” Stated simply, it means that when a question is asked, the questioner (from the teacher or another student) waits for at least three seconds in silence before responding. According to the research (<https://www.thoughtco.com/importance-of-wait-time-8405>), if a teacher employs wait time, the length and thoughtfulness of their students’ responses increases as well as the number of students who are involved. In addition, if the teacher uses wait time effectively, the quality of the questions increases. Based on my own experiences, I strongly support this strategy with one caution. Wait time must be used appropriately, i.e., when the questions require thought at some level. Naturally if you are asking “remembering” type questions, the wait time should be shorter. (I remember one particularly “embarrassing” question I asked on one pre-coffee morning. When a woman attended our Bible study class for the second time, I asked, “Could you remind me of your name?” When she immediately responded, I waited for about 2 very long seconds and said, “Good, that’s right!” Certainly not one of my more brilliant moments!)

Involvement: One of the major purposes of a good discussion is to involve everyone. We all want to hear opinions, thoughts, questions, and experiences that contribute to our knowledge of God. Sometimes, only a few students contribute or appear to be hesitant to respond. This is especially true if you have students from other countries or cultures. I was very fortunate when I taught in Houston in a multicultural setting where English was not the first language of

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many of my students. I was amazed how after a very short time, even students who had difficulty expressing ideas in English were involved in our discussions. James was a Christian from Malaysia who was working on his graduate degree. I remember James' question about our Easter celebration, "What do chickens, eggs, and bunnies have to do with Easter?" His question prompted a great deal of discussion in our class, one that was good for all of us to think about as we reevaluated our priorities during the Easter season.

So, how does a teacher involve everyone? You must be intentional with specific questions. These questions can have many possible answers and can be answered in a variety of ways. Depending on the size of the group, students can also be asked to talk to the person next to them about the question. Then the duos can share their responses. I often use the phrase, "Let's hear from everyone on this question . . . and no one can respond twice until everyone has a chance to speak if they want to do so." When I use that phrase, I would then go around the group asking students to respond. I also make sure that everyone has a choice if they want to respond or not. They can simply pass or give short or lengthy responses. Getting everyone involved is very critical to our Bible study, so I make sure everyone's ideas and experiences are shared in a safe environment.

"Thinker" Time: As I mentioned in the section on wait time, some questions and discussions are quite important and require time for a quality response. I often will begin the class with a question that "we will answer in 15 minutes" or "at the end of the session." In other words, I am giving them some time to prepare an answer. Most often, I present something to "think about" for the lesson next week. In this way, students have more than enough time to prepare an answer if they wish. I find that the most effective way to do this is to assign the scripture for the next week and give them a question that I will be asking. I am always amazed at how the students come through and respond in a variety of ways. In some cases, students who have never contributed at an earlier chance feel comfortable sharing when they have had some time to think and prepare.

Although I have many examples of students who provided so many wonderful answers or comments, I can think of two special men, Don and Ray, who normally did not contribute orally in the group. However, at just the right time, they both vividly described their experiences in answer to a question, and they made a difference for all who heard them. Don discussed a mugging and accident that he had and his Christian response to the perpetrator. Ray described his actions as an officer in the army during the race riots of 1968 and how it affected his relationships. I am so glad both men felt comfortable sharing their experiences in class. Because they did, we learned more about what it means to journey through challenging life situations as a Christian.

## HOW DID JESUS FACILITATE A DISCUSSION? AN EXAMPLE

### NOTES

John 4:3-42 records a beautiful example of a discussion that Jesus had with a woman at the well. Let's look at what He did to engage the woman, the request He made, the answers He gave, what He did to facilitate a discussion, and His eternal answer that changed her life.

- **Jesus intentionally goes to Sychar in Samaria.**

Verses 3-5a: "So he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. Now he had to go through Samaria. So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar."

- **Jesus asks for a drink of the water from the woman who is drawing water.**

Verse 7: "When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, 'Will you give me a drink?'"

- **The woman asks a question that reminds Him that He has done something unusual.**

Verse 9: "The Samaritan woman said to him, 'You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?'"

- **Jesus answers her question by connecting it to her needs at the moment.**

Verse 10: "Jesus answered her, 'If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.'"

- **The woman asks a very practical question.**

Verse 11: "'Sir,' the woman said, 'you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?'"

- **Jesus answers her practical question first and then gives her the eternal answer!**

Verses 13-14: "Jesus answered, 'Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'"


 NOTES

- **The woman *requests* the eternal answer.**

Verse 15: “The woman said to him, ‘Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.’”
- **Jesus *answers her* and tells her what action to take.**

Verse 16: “He told her, ‘Go, call your husband and come back.’”
- **The woman *responds* and gives an excuse.**

Verse 17a: “‘I have no husband,’ she replied.”
- **Jesus *acknowledges* her response.**

Verse 17b-18: “Jesus said to her, ‘You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.’”
- **The woman *tries to sidetrack the discussion*.**

Verse 20: “‘Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.’”
- **Jesus *responds* to her comment, *clarifying* He is the Christ, the Messiah.**

Verse 26: “Then Jesus declared, ‘I, the one speaking to you—I am he.’”
- **The woman *agrees with His declaration and shares His story*.**

Verse 28-29: “Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, ‘Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Messiah?’”
- **AND MANY BELIEVED! *Because of the woman’s testimony and the word of Jesus***

Verse 41-42: “And because of his words many more became believers. They said to the woman, ‘We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.’”

**NOTES**

I wish I had been there during this discussion! I imagine that there were many silent “wait times” because of the “thinker” questions. I imagine that the woman poured water while she was thinking of her questions. I also see that Jesus quietly responded to each of her concerns after listening carefully to her comments. Obviously, Jesus knew what she needed at the very beginning of the conversation, but He listened to her needs and her questions. He responded with both questions and answers that ultimately led to “many of the Samaritans” believing in Jesus. Indeed, a beautiful discussion!

**CLOSING THOUGHT**

Questioning strategies and the facilitation of discussions are necessary skills for any teacher. Implementing them provides learning opportunities for students. God created us to be in fellowship with Him and understands that we all learn by asking questions and communicating with Him and others. Yes, questions and discussions are important, but our faith in God is without doubt the most important. One of my favorite quotes is from Oswald Chambers, “Faith is deliberate confidence in the character of God whose ways you may not understand at the time.”

## APPLICATION



### NOTES

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

1. Select the scripture for a Bible study lesson that you will be teaching. Write two questions that fit each question type. Employ some of the verbs from the chart and incorporate some of the questions from your Bible study materials as well as some original ones.
2. Record a 10-15 minute discussion in your Bible study group. Listen or watch the discussion that occurs. Time the amount of teacher and student talk in the class. Reflect on how wait time, involvement, and thinker time can be increased in your Bible study.
3. Select a portion of the Scriptures that records a discussion that Jesus had with a group or individual. Analyze the interactions that occurred and relate them to the ideas presented in this session.

### 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. At the “Remembering” level, questions require students to fuse information in a new, but similar, situation?
  - A. True
  - B. False
2. The “Understanding” level requires students to make sense out of information and understand. Which set of verbs are useful for this level?
  - A. build, describe, plan
  - B. design, restate, test
  - C. explain, memorize, compare/contrast
  - D. judge, outline, prioritize
  - E. none of the above
3. Evaluating questions require learners to use information to create something new.
  - A. True
  - B. False
4. Analyzing questions require learners to take information apart and explore relationships.
  - A. True
  - B. False
5. Sometimes it is helpful to ask questions that will not require students to answer until the following session together.
  - A. True
  - B. False

## DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR MENTOR AND PARTICIPANT

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**NOTES**

Be prepared to discuss the following with your mentor:

1. Give your mentor your responses to application activities 1 and 3. Discuss a few of the higher level questions and the way that you might use them in a Bible study.
2. Share your analysis of the teacher and student talk in your Bible study. Talk about your reflections in application activity 2.
3. Talk about the questions you and your mentor have had for God. Pray about His answers and how your faith has grown.