

And the Question is...

If there is one skill an effective Sabbath school teacher must have, it is the ability to ask great questions. Nothing can make or break a lesson study more than the quality of the questions being asked by the leader.

Questions can be placed into 3 categories: Great – OK - Poor

Great questions are usually indicated by the amount of raised hands and the eagerness of the participants.

Ok questions are usually indicated by a lackluster response.

Poor questions result in the emergence of the sounds of crickets 🦗

Here are some examples of different types of questions:

Example One

Q1: Is God real?

A: Yes.

Result: Discussion ends as soon as it starts

Q2: What does the bible say about God being real?

A: Some evidences may be recited for proof by those who are biblically versed.

Result: Some discussion started.

Q3: How has God manifested Himself in your life?

A: Personal accounts can be given that can be offered by anyone.

Result: Great discussion by many different individuals.

Example Two

Q1: Does the story of the Prodigal Son teach us about God's love?

A: Yes.

Result: Discussion ends as soon as it starts

Q2: What are some of the lessons we learn from the Prodigal Son about God's love?

A: Wide range of suggestions can be given from anyone, not just those versed in biblical history

Result: Great discussion by many different individuals.

Using this approach with additional great follow-up questions will result in a lively discussion where anyone can feel free to participate. Special attention should be given to making sure that anyone can participate, not just those who are well versed in biblical history and/ or denominational doctrine.

As you prepare your talking points for this week's lesson, write out at least 4 great questions that will stimulate discussion. If the questions are limited to one correct answer, redo them so that there can be multiple responses to build your discussion around.

5 Cardinal Sins

I got up early that morning, excited to know that I would soon get the opportunity to visit a new Sabbath school. I was out of town for the weekend and decided I would visit the main church of this anonymous city.

I arrived early before Sabbath school started and waited until a few more cars arrived before I entered the church. The church was attractive and I looked forward to a learning experience during Sabbath school.

Shortly after the appointed time for Sabbath school to begin, the superintendent arrived to start the program. He looked hurried and perhaps he had an emergency that prevented him from being there before the service start time.

After the superintendents' remarks and song service ended I counted approximately 12 people there. The superintendent welcomed back a missing member who had been away due to illness. She received a warm amen from the audience.

Strangely though to me, I, as a visitor, was never acknowledged. Although there were only a dozen of us there, there was no welcome extended to the visitor(s). **Cardinal Sin #1**

Next came the division of classes for lesson study. There was no direction from the front geared to a visitor explaining what was about to happen. Everyone simply got up and went to their classes. I stayed seated, not knowing if there would be a class in my section or not. **Cardinal Sin #2**

Thankfully a teacher arrived who covered this section of the church. He greeted me and the one other class member there at the beginning of the lesson. Although I sat directly in front of him, after his initial greeting, the teacher never once looked at me again. He directed all of his comments and discussion to his regular members. **Cardinal Sin #3**

After the lesson study ended and the transition began to divine service, no one from the Sabbath school department inquired who I was. It's as if I was invisible. **Cardinal Sin #4**

After sitting there for a few minutes I decided that maybe I had made a mistake in choosing this particular church to worship at. If this was the tone set by the church, I didn't want to stay for the 11:00 service. I made my way out of the church and to my car without any interaction from the members of that church. **Cardinal Sin #5**

I told myself 2 things:

- 1) I would never visit this church again.
- 2) I needed to make sure that these obvious signs of a Sabbath school department without a goal for growth would not be things my home church was guilty of.

Whether large or small, every Sabbath school department should plan for growth and anticipate the presence of visitors. We have to make a conscious effort to look at what we do from the perspective of someone who has never been to one of our services before. Simple Christian courtesy would go a long way towards remedying many of these issues.

The whole circle of our obligation to one another is covered by that word of Christ's, "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." Matthew 7:12. Education 136