

“Teaching a Relief Society Lesson Using a Conference Talk”

- Preparation: Searching for Principles
- Generating Effective Class Discussion
- “Feasting and Savoring”: Testifying





If I were going to teach a class on Sunday, I would read through and begin praying about that lesson the Sunday before. That gives me a full week to pray, to seek inspiration, to think, to read and watch for real-life applications that will give vitality to my message. You won't finalize the lesson that early, but you will be surprised to find how many things come to you during the week, how much God gives you—things that you will feel to use when you do finalize your preparation.

May I also encourage you to avoid a temptation that faces almost every teacher in the Church. That is the temptation to cover too much material, the temptation to stuff more into the hour—or more into the students—than they can possibly hold!

It's better to take just a few good ideas and get good discussion—and good learning—than to be frenzied, trying to teach every word in the manual. So, like you, I have had to choose and select; I'm holding some material over for another day.

An unrushed atmosphere is absolutely essential if you are to have the Spirit of the Lord present in your class. Too many of us rush. We rush right past the Spirit of the Lord trying to beat the clock in some absolutely unnecessary footrace.



Worksheet:

“Lesson Planning Idea”



- Lesson Title
- Thesis or Specific Purpose Statement
- Teaching Gospel Principles
- Effective Questions

Good Discussion Questions...

- Open vs. Closed ended
- Consider the needs of the sisters in your class. What is the level of understanding? What needs/concerns are on their minds?
- Utilize the questions embedded in the Conference talk.
- Good questions prompt thought and participation *during* class, AND thought and action *after* class.
- Help sisters apply Gospel principles to “real life”.
- Ask “Questions for Contemplation”

Feasting and Testifying

- Leaving the Table “filled”.
 - 3 Nephi 31:20
 - D&C 50:22
- Issuing Challenges—sometimes are found in the Conference talks. Reissue the challenge!
- Bearing Personal Testimony

I have been painfully disappointed over the years at wonderful lessons, given by loyal, gifted teachers who, somehow, at the end of a class, say, “Well, there is the bell. Brother Jones, would you give the prayer?” And it’s over. There’s no closing of the books, no looking in the eye for just a minute, no settling down to say, in effect, where have we been and where are we going and what does the Lord want us to do? In some cases—I’m being a little unfair and a little extravagant, but to make a point—not a single reference is made to what this lesson was supposed to mean to the student or to the teacher. I’m left to walk away saying, “I wonder how he felt about that. I wonder what she thought about it or what it was supposed to mean to me.” There is so much effort to get some doctrine, some principle, some map, some video clip across to the students, but not a hint of personal testimony about what that doctrine or that principle meant to the teacher, the one who was supposed to lead us and guide us and walk beside us.



As President J. Reuben Clark Jr. once said, “Never let your faith be difficult to detect.” May I repeat that? “Never let your faith be difficult to detect.” Never sow seeds of doubt. Avoid self-serving performance and vanity. Don’t try to dazzle everyone with how brilliant you are. Dazzle them with how brilliant the gospel is. Don’t worry about the location of the lost tribes or the Three Nephites. Worry a little more about the location of your student, what’s going on in his heart, what’s going on in her soul, the hunger, sometimes the near-desperate spiritual needs of our people. Teach them. And, above all, testify to them. Love them. Bear your witness from the depths of your soul. It will be the most important thing you say to them in the entire hour, and it may save someone’s spiritual life.

—Elder Jeffrey R. Holland