

LESSON PLANS QUICK SHEET

Purpose

Every planning process begins with and is grounded in prayer. Teaching in the faith community is akin to preaching. Both require careful preparation and both must be open to the leading of, and be guided by, the Holy Spirit. Just as when preparing to preach we ask questions of the text and it asks question of us. So too, when planning a lesson, we need to listen for the questions being asked. These are called guiding questions and serve as the foundation for building a cohesive, vibrant and relevant session. The prime directive in any type of planning is this: FORM follows FUNCTION! This means you must first decide what the function of this lesson, event or meeting is. Then, and only then, do you plan the activities. Activities and methodology are in service to purpose or function. They are not the goal but rather the means through which it is achieved.

Publishable Quality

A good Lesson Plan needs an orderly flow so that each section and activity builds upon the next in order for the ideas to be taught as clearly as possible. A fully functional Lesson Plan should be written in such a manner that anyone could pick it up and teach it in your absence. This is affectionately, if morbidly amusing, known as the “CDH” factor. Write your Lesson Plan so that if you were hit by a bus on your way to teach, the person who comes by you could pry it from your “cold dead hand” and teach it without missing a beat. This will mean that you must write out all the directions to each of the activities, include instructions for setting up the room, any lecture material and/or exegesis to support your lesson. Details, details, details! Write the Lesson Plan as if you were going to publish it and the person using it has none of the knowledge you have in writing it.

On Our Way

A Lesson Plan is a road map that helps participants in your lesson understand and experience your proposition statement. It will have a “context” and it will have a “content” section. The context informs the teacher about the trip, its terrain and who is going with you. In Lesson Plan language this means the “context” includes: audience, context, class environment, time frame, scope of study, research, proposition statement, text, resources and materials and what the teacher will need to do to prepare. The “context” guides the teacher on his or her journey and provides instructions for when to move, to linger, to stop and how you will know when you’ve reached your destination. In Lesson Plan language this means the “content” includes: a time of gathering for the class, the content and the means by which it will be communicated, a way for the participants to engage the content of your proposition statement and a way of sending the participants back into discipleship. These are often grouped around a common purpose (opening,

content, closing, etc.) and are the “movements’ of the Lesson Plan. There are generally five movements to any lesson plan.

The Context and Content of Lesson Plans

Audience/Context – a description of the participants whom you will be teaching and demographic type information about the church and surrounding community

Class Environment – the location and set up of the classroom where you will teach

Time Frame – when the class begins and ends, the amount of actual teaching time and if this particular lesson is one of a series or stands alone

Scope of Study – the focal point of the lesson. If the lesson is one of a series, include an overall focus statement for the series and the place of this particular lesson within the whole series, what has been covered before and what will be covered after. Also include the focus statement for this particular lesson.

Research – This is the point in which you do your research on the focus on the lesson. Everything we teach for faith is either biblical or theological or both. Do your exegesis, read your commentaries, consult the theology books and make your notes. This is your content.

Proposition Statement – using the what/how/why format create a clear and succinct statement of what you will teach in this lesson

Insights Page and Teaching Points - Each lesson plan must have content for the teacher. There are two places this content will show up in a publishable quality lesson plan: The Insights Page and in Teaching Points. The **Insights Page will be located in the Appendix**. It contains major theological and/or biblical ideas that will reinforce the WHAT and the WHY of our Teaching Proposition. The teacher will use the Insights Page to craft a lecture (or mini-lectures), slide presentations or to weave into discussions during class. **Teaching Points are embedded in the body of the lesson**. They are in addition to the Insights Page. You may find it helpful to list everything you want to convey, then decide which gets placed in the Teaching Points and which reside in the Insights Page. (See Sample Lesson Plan for an example.)

Text – the biblical passage or other sources that are using in this study or session

Leader Preparation for In-Person Teaching AND Virtual Teaching (you will complete this section after you write the content of the lesson) - the things you need to do BEFORE you get to class (e.g., prepare handout, prepare and read exegesis, set up the room, purchase refreshments, make copies, gather supplies, etc.) You will write BOTH on each LP.

Resources and Materials for In-Person Teaching AND Virtual Teaching (you will complete this section after you write the body of the lesson) – the list of any books, cd’s, dvd’s, audio visual equipment, markers, pencils, newsprint, paper, posters, signs, pictures, etc., you and the class will need to full participate in this session. You will write BOTH on each LP.

Teaching Outline (you will complete this section after you write the body of the lesson) – create a brief outline that will guide you at-a-glance through the flow of the lesson you’ve written out in detail in the following four movements. This is the

outline from which you will teach. It should be no longer than one page and include time estimations.

Gathering Rituals – This is where the substance of your lesson plan begins. This first movement is the time participants arrive and any activities planned should be those that allow for people to drift in at varying times. For adults this may mean a time of refreshments and informal conversation, “get-to-know-you” games, a craft activity or open center play. If it is a game or activity tie it to the theme of the lesson but don’t make it so essential that those who come in later will have miss crucial information for the lesson.

Teaching the What – This is where you focus on the “what” of your teaching proposition. This is where you communicate the information that you want students to know and consider about the topic. There are numerous methods and approaches that may be used in order to convey your topic. Movements two and three comprise the bulk of your lesson plan and time.

Teaching the Why – This is where you focus on “why” the material (the “what) is important to them and their faith. Again, there are various methods and approaches for providing participant response.

The Teaching How – This is where you give the students the chance to consider and engage how the “what” is lived out or “how” the topic (the “what” and “why” make a difference in our lives. Various methods and approaches can be used.

The Discerning How – Too often, teaching sessions rush to prescribed outcomes and activities when it is more helpful and faithful to create space for participants to consider how they will connect faith and daily living. This section creates space for discernment. Discernment about faithful living is best done in community. Use the following questions, or those of your own, to prompt honest, vulnerable and deep discussion about embodying our faith in the world. This can be done as a whole group, in small groups or in pairs. In this session we are creating space for the work of the Spirit in building a bridge between what we believe and how we live. Because discipleship is a “team sport,” we do this together, in conversation with other disciples who are on this journey with us. The key is for each person, in community, to wrestle with how this new understanding of covenant will change the way we think, the way we act and who we are at the core of our being as we all seek to live into greater faithfulness. Crafting questions that invite participants into deeper theological thinking about how what they learned in this session will make a difference in their personal lives, in their community, the Church, nation and world.

Sending Rituals – This is a time of “sending” out. Ritual like sharing joys and concern followed by prayer, litanies, and scripture are a few ideas. The key is to mark the end of class and commission participants into discipleship

Evaluate - Unless specifically noted, **this section is not included in the written lesson plan** but is an essential part of a teacher’s practice. After teaching examine what worked well and what you would do differently. Make notes for yourself and amend your lesson plan.