

Teaching for Transformation: Five Secrets from the Master Teacher

A central part of a healthy youth ministry is the teaching of God's Word. But after spending hours in school, and even more hours consuming media, the minds of young people are numb and unresponsive. How was Christ able to hold the attention of crowds for hours? Why did his teaching stick – and transform? What can we learn from him that will make our teaching attractive, interesting, and life changing to young people who are hearing lots of noise?

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Jesus was the master teacher, the greatest the world has known.

What would happen if he took the pulpit in your church, led the discussion at one of your youth meetings, or was the special speaker at your summer camp? How would his teaching look different from yours, how would the people respond differently than they do to you?

Unfortunately he can't be invited. But he has sent you in his place. How are you doing at filling his shoes?

Of course, none of us can be as effective as the master. But we can probably be more like him than we are. I am convinced that many of the skills he used are ones we can learn. However, the surprising thing we find as we study his teaching is not just that he did certain things better than we do, but that many of the things he did well, we don't do AT ALL!

These are the secrets of Jesus teaching method, the little known and even less applied skills of a master teacher. Study them deeply, apply them carefully. They could transform your teaching - and radically change the lives of all who hear you speak.

Main Thought:

If you teach like Jesus did people will:

1. Remember
2. Respond

Five Secrets from the Master Teacher

A. Secret #1 - Tension

Jesus used tension to capture people's attention, to make them think, and to help them remember.

"You can't make a horse drink, but you can put salt in his food."

"A number of modern educators believe that creating perplexity, unrest, and doubt in the students is essential as a prelude to learning"

Reinsmith - "Education for Change"

"Learning involvement is at its best when learner perplexity is just short of frustration. When people feel a positive sense of dissatisfaction they will think harder and reflect more deeply."

Wlodkowski - "Enhancing Adult Motivation to Learn"

1. Tension to capture people's attention

John 3:3

Jesus began with a statement that stirred up confusion in Nicodemus, and then taught in response to his questions. He first created a hunger and curiosity, then gave him the answers.

2. Tension to make them think

Luke 24:13-32- Emmaus Road

They began downcast eyes (vs 17) and slow hearts (vs 25) and ended with open eyes (vs 31) and burning hearts (vs 32).

3. Tension to make them remember

John 21:17,24 - Feed my sheep

The greater your struggle to find an answer, the better you remember it once it is found.

Sermon comparison

Sermon	Length	Number of tension statements	Percentage of entire sermon
Sermon on the mount	2000 words	49	46%
Czech sermon #1	2285 words	2	1.4%
Czech sermon #2	2416 words	7	4.3%
Czech sermon #3	2769 words	1	1.8%

What creates tension?

- Unresolved problems
- the conflict between truth and life
- the conflict between what I believe and how I act
- opposing viewpoints
- unanswered questions
- unfinished stories

- unwanted consequences
- danger
- potential reward
- embarrassment
- failure
- relationships
- love

It must be optimal - too much and people give up, too little and they never get involved.

It must lead them somewhere - we never just want tension for tension's sake

We normally don't have to create tension - it already exists. Our task is to uncover it and then use it.

B. Secret #2 - Relevance

Jesus responded to current problems, spoke directly to specific people, and applied his truth immediately to their lives.

1. Responded to current problems

Matt 5:22-23

Matt 6:5-7

2. Spoke directly to specific people

"I tell you"

3. Applied his truth immediately to their lives

Matt 5:39-42

It takes only 8 years for the information stored in the libraries and computers of the world to double. On top of that, every day we are bombarded with expensive, sophisticated attempts to get our attention. To find our way in such a world we develop an unconscious filter that automatically discards all information that is not interesting or usable.

That means a teacher must show his material is relevant, and convince listeners they need to hear what he is going to say.

Sermon comparison

Sermon	Specific problems mentioned	Number of times he says "you" or "your"	Specific statements of application - "do this"
Sermon on the mount	46	85	40
Czech sermon #1	1	5	0
Czech sermon #2	4	3	0
Czech sermon #3	0	3	1

Tips for us today:

C. Secret #3 - Stories and Illustrations

"He did not say anything to them without using a parable" Matt 13:34

Jesus used:

1. Pictures

Matt 7:3-5

Matt 7:14

2. Stories (both true and hypothetical)

Matt 7:9-11

3. Illustrations

Matt 7:24-27

Sermon comparison

Sermon	Pictures	Stories	Illustrations	Total
Sermon on the mount	20	1	30	51
Czech sermon #1	0	1	1	2
Czech sermon #2	0	1	7	8
Czech sermon #3	0	0	2	2

Where to find illustrations

your life
family
friends
history
nature
the news
books, movies, TV
sports

How to be a master story teller

1. Recreate the experience
2. Make the people come alive
3. Capture the emotions
4. Be compact - it should be vivid and colorful, but stripped of details that don't fit into the story line.

D. Secret #4 - Questions

A high percentage of Jesus teaching was in dialogue form, and he often asked or responded to questions.

Sermon comparison

Sermon	Questions asked	Questions responded to
Sermon on the mount	13	0
All of Jesus teaching	225	103
Czech sermon #1	2	0
Czech sermon #2	20	0
Czech sermon #3	6	0

"In the skillful use of the question more than anything else lies the fine art of teaching; for in such use we have the guide to clear and vivid ideas, the quick spur to imagination, the stimulus to thought, the incentive to action"

Charles DeGarmo "Interest and Education"

Jesus used questions to:

1. To make them think

Matt 5:46-47

Matt 6:26-28

2. To make them talk

Matt 16:13-19

3. To help them find the truth themselves

Matt 17:24-27

4. To show them their error

Matt 16:8-12

Mark 3:2-5

"A question may more effectively expose the problem than would accusation or innuendo. Assisting students to identify their own spiritual inadequacy is usually more effective than identifying it for them. A corrective question can challenge learners to change in a remarkable way."

Fortosis "Can Questions Make Educators More Effective?"

Jesus experienced three basic kinds of questions

1. Questions used to attack him or resist what he was saying

Matt 22:15-18

2. Questions from people responding to his teaching (often because they did not understand or were confused by what he was saying)

John 3:3, 9

3. Questions people had about life or spiritual issues.

Matt 9:14

Application

E. Secret #5 - Power and authority

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

Matt 7:28-29

Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit, and news about him spread through the whole countryside. He taught in their synagogues, and everyone praised him.

Luke 4:14-15

What does it look like when someone teaches with spiritual power and authority?

What does it look like when that power and authority is not there?

Four things that can bring power and authority to our teaching

1. Speaking the Words of God

John 14:24

John 7:16

2. Following the leading of God

John 12:49-50

3. Remaining clean before God

John 15:2-5

4. Deepening our passion for God

John 21:17