

FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

Galatians 5:22-23

Jesus, The Master Teacher

Jesus Christ referred to Himself as a teacher, others called Him “Teacher” and His enemies recognized Him as a teacher. Forty-five times Christ is referred to as Teacher in the Gospels. It is no surprise then that teaching was an important part of Christ’s public ministry. But, what was it that made Jesus a great Teacher? Do those of us who volunteer to teach at the Feast of Tabernacles have what it takes to be a great Teacher?

Educators in public schools use the terms, *direct* and *indirect instruction* to classify teaching methods. They believe every method has an advantage and disadvantage. It is believed as well that there is no one “right” method of teaching. To some degree this is true. Look at Jesus’ example.

Jesus was not bound to one “right” way. He was able to move from the simple to the profound, concrete to abstract and at every turn His objective was clear. Never did He grandstand or become the “sage on the stage.” He was a Teacher that was committed to changing lives. What is the “right” way when teaching children in Sabbath School?

What is “right” for a particular lesson depends on the age, what does the student already know, time, space, objective of the lesson, materials etc. The Christian Teacher must be concerned about these variables along with dispensing Biblical information and transforming lives. It is an enormous challenge. Let’s take a look at some of the methods Jesus used and see how

we as Christians Teachers can apply His techniques.

Jesus would consistently include Scriptures into His teachings. Read Matthew 19:4-6, Luke 24:27, 32, 44, 45. A story or parable was not told just because Christ enjoyed telling stories. They were used as a method of teaching an important lesson. An example of this is seen in Matthew 13:3-53. When the disciples asked Jesus why He used parables to teach, Jesus answered them with a riddle. “I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.” He went on to use a metaphor— the seed that a sower casts will only grow on fertile ground. Real life opportunities were used as well to teach a valuable lesson (Matthew 12:1-8). His use of asking questions formed the center of His teaching method.

The Gospels record over a hundred different questions Jesus asked. He used a variety of question techniques. He used questions as a springboard to teach (Matthew 13:10-23). To get the attention of His students, He would ask questions. He would ask rhetorical questions (Luke 13:18,20) and provocative questions that would make a student think. “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God” (Mark 10:18). To elicit what His students believed, Jesus asked probing questions. The young lawyer asked Jesus what he had to do to inherit eternal life. Jesus answered, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” (Luke 10:26) At the end of a lesson, Jesus would ask a question (Luke 10; 36-37).

Jesus was a creative Teacher because he used the concrete to teach a difficult abstract concept. He would make a comparison of what was known and understood to help the student comprehend (Matthew 23:37). He used everyday objects as visual aids (Matthew 6:26-30; John 4:35). He created the symbols to help each of us understand spiritual realities and remember Him (Matthew 26:26-29).

There are basic teaching principles demonstrated by Christ that we can use today. He was always well prepared (Matthew 5-7) and He developed His lessons around the needs of His students (Matthew 4:18, 19). He was concise, clear and went to the heart of the matter. He did not ramble (Mark 2:2-12). As already discussed, He used great illustration and was never distracted (John 4:7-25). In a kind and loving way, He would challenge His student to put to practice the truth he had heard (Mark 10:17-27). Finally, Jesus always glorified God and encouraged His students (John 11:38-44; 15:1-17).

The Christian Teacher has a unique opportunity to help mold and develop his students as disciples for Christ. He is their shepherd and friend. He has the privilege to model the attitude of loving service and there can be no nobler experience.

Jesus set a perfect example and held a high standard of personal qualities for each of us to follow. As you prepare yourself spiritually and mentally to teach at the Feast of Tabernacles, read the following qualities Jesus possessed and then ask yourself if you strive to possess the same.

- Christ lived a holy and righteous life (Matthew 3:13-17).

- Jesus prayed and trusted in the Lord (Mark 1:35, Luke 5:16; 6:12-16).
- Jesus was warm, friendly and patient (Mark 10:13-16).
- Jesus cared about people (Luke 8:40-56).
- Jesus was always courteous and He spoke the truth in a loving way (John 4:16-18).
- He served others (John 13:1-17).
- He was sensitive to the needs of those around Him (Matthew 17:24-27; Luke 5:4-10; John 2:1-11).

Jesus Christ means more to us than being the perfect “Teacher”. He is the chief cornerstone and foundation of Christianity. He is the living Head of His Church. Christ was there at the beginning of creation and He will be there at the end. He is the center of God’s redemptive plan of salvation for all of mankind. He is our Savior who is ever present and dwelling in our souls (Galatians 2:20).

In prayer, ask Jesus to mold, develop and equip you to be the best teacher you can be. Then in faith, allow Him to use you as the tool to produce fruit in the lives of the children you teach.