

Teaching Tip: The Silence Cure

You are teaching a group of twenty high school students. You are weaving an elaborate and wonderful story about Moses and the declaration of God's name. It is all building up to a key moment. You just want them to be able to answer this one question. Your whole lesson rides on their understanding of this question. You pause, dramatically. You ask: why does Moses want to know God's name? There is silence. There are crickets chirping. Ryan is sleeping. Two others are playing GameBoy. What is wrong? How could this happen? Surely your story was brilliant! Surely you have their attention! Surely they know the answer! These are smart, provocative, thoughtful creatures. What could possibly be wrong?

TASK: Decide on three things that you could do in the dramatic silence. Which is the best option? Check **FEEDBACK 5** (page 250).

Thou Shall Steal

Let me explain. One of the best sources of teaching ideas is other teachers. We all stand to learn a great deal from observing others and also being observed. Whenever you have the opportunity to be involved in a learning environment lead by someone else, observe their choices and reflect on their efficacy. If you see something that works in another teacher's class or youth group, go ahead and steal it! In exceptional situations, it may be wise to seek permission; in other situations, you will simply be imitating an effective practice of teaching.

The expansion of this principle is planned observation. If you want to be evaluated as a teacher, have somebody whom you respect, observe and evaluate your own lessons. You might ask a colleague to watch a lesson and compare your stated aims with what you are achieving in the classroom. Decide on certain questions that the observer will answer. This may be a mutual endeavour or a one-sided one, a routine assessment or a unique one. Making yourself vulnerable to feedback will allow you to grow beyond your current abilities, which will in turn allow you to be a better guide through Truth.

You have come to the end of these Tidbits. I began by suggesting that good content can only be enhanced by good form. May God bless you and your ministries with both! May He reveal to you Truth and help you to reveal it to others! Amen.