

Breathe

Module: Q & Eh?

Lesson 1: The Set-up for Questions

Objectives:

Students will be able to

- describe how midrash learning is used in Jewish culture.
- identify the motives and concerns of different people in a bible story (Luke 2:41-52).
- develop an on-going list of questions they'd like to ask Jesus and other wise people.

Materials Needed:

- optional: Chart paper taped on the wall and markers
- Bibles
- Pen/pencil and paper
- equipment to show video clip (e.g. LCD projector, laptop with DVD player, speakers)
- video clip: from “the Simpsons”, season 3, episode 6, 15:38-19:57 though the clip can be started at 17:24 if time is limited (this clip is where Bart tries to convince the Rabbi to forgive his son Krusty the Clown)
 - this episode is also available at
http://www.wejew.com/media/7276/The_Simpsons_Like_Father_Like_Clown_with_Jackie_Mason/
- optional: a laptop that can download video from a cell phone or digital camera

Pre-lesson preparation:

- Ensure you have the correct DVD/VHS of the episode and set-up the video equipment with the video clip cued.
- Place a bible in each of the 3 corners of the room you will use in the Action section of the lesson.

Minds On: (10 minutes)

Game: Questions Only

Tell the students they are going to play a game called “Questions Only”. In this game they will have a conversation using only questions based on a situation you will tell them: they cannot make statements, repeat the same question back, or use single word questions. The goal is to keep the conversation going as long as possible. Have students gather in threes. The conversation will go clockwise. The leader gives the theme or situation (e.g. You are Noah and his son, discussing what happened to the unicorns, or the Three Wise Men discussing what order they should enter the stable, or two angels trying to help another frightened angel down from a really high cloud). Repeat the activity with new scenarios as many times as you feel appropriate. This group will become the “home” group for the next activity.

Note on Teaching Practice: Jigsaw Structure

A “jigsaw” is an instructional strategy that places a student into two groupings: a “home” group, and an “expert” group. The main idea is that each student in the group is accountable or responsible for “expertise” with information or skills needed for the entire “home” group to complete a task. Typically, students start with the home group to develop a sense of affiliation, responsibility and interdependence with their home group members, move to the expert group to learn specific and different knowledge from other expert groups, and then return to the home group to share the expert knowledge with their other home group members, then ideally, to analyze or synthesize the relationships among the information shared by the experts. Three things are needed for a successful jigsaw: a clear means of placing students into two groupings, a clear expert group task that is different from the other expert group tasks; and that the expert knowledge, be required for the home group to complete a task.

Action: (50 minutes)

Expert Groups: Identifying with a character

Ask students, in their groups from the Minds On activity to label themselves 1-3.

Prompt:

When I say go, you'll be leaving your home groups and gathering into 3 expert groups, looking at Luke 2:41-52 from the perspective of a specific character. Read the passage as a group, and then take 5 min. to discuss your character's thoughts or feelings in the passage. Afterwards, each person needs to be prepared to report your expert group's answers back to your home group. Don't move until I say "Go". "Ones" will be the "parents" in this story, and you will meet in this corner, "Twos" will represent the "teachers" in the story, in that corner, and "threes" will represent "Jesus" in the story, over here. Read the passage and then discuss your character's thoughts and feelings.

Check for understanding by asking if anyone is NOT clear about your instructions. When ready, give them the "go" and have them move into their activity.

Optional Strategy

One option to facilitate each expert's group discussion is to use "Role on the wall". Each group tapes a piece of chart paper to the wall. In the center of the paper, have the group write the name of the character they wish to understand better. Then students write words on the paper that they think represent the character's motives, back-story, knowledge, ideas and struggles. This can be a very rich and useful strategy for understanding many characters from the bible, although, because of the depth of thinking, it might take longer than "listing".

Home Groups: Creating and performing a drama

Tell the students in a moment they will be creating a short drama about the passage with the other members of their home groups. The drama should be no more than 2 min. and include the insights discovered by each expert group. (You might give your students the

option to produce a “YouTube” video.) Tell them they will have 15 minutes to prepare their drama. Ask the students to thank their expert group partners then return to their home groups.

Note: Circulation

During group work, it’s good to circulate amongst the groups not to micromanage but to get a sense of their process and findings. Also, it’s easier for students to ask for clarity.

Have each group present their drama, and be sure to applaud each effort. After all dramas have been presented, ask the students what insights they had making and watching the dramas. These could be insights about Jesus, his parents, or any other part of the story. Allow some “think time” then take a few answers.

Prompt:

In Jesus’ time, there were generally three stages in school. The middle one is called Beth-Midrash (which generally had students aged 10-14 years). Among other things, one of the objectives was to help students learn how to interact with Scripture by asking questions. They would even answer a question with a question. For example, if someone asked them “What’s 2×2 ?”, instead of answering “4”, they might answer “what’s $16 \div 4$?” This way, students not only showed they knew the answer, but they also brought in other concepts into the conversation. That’s what we tried doing earlier in this lesson. Noticed in verse 46, Jesus was both answering and asking questions. As a 12 year old, he would have been in the middle of Beth-midrash. Here’s another example.

Show Simpson’s clip.

Consolidate/Debrief: (10 minutes)

Prompt:

Over the next few weeks, we'll be asking and exploring lots of questions because questions help us explore areas we may not have been aware of before. We're going to have conversations with Jesus and each other through our questions.

Breathe In

Have students take a chair and place it on front of them. Ask them imagine that Jesus is sitting in that chair. What questions would they like to ask Jesus? Have them make a list of their questions. Encourage them to keep that list available (maybe in their coat pocket or next to their bed) so they can add to it as they think of more questions. Tell the students they will need the questions for the next lesson, and to remember to bring them to youth group next time.

Note: Modelling

For some students, seeing a live demonstration of an activity helps them to understand the parameters of it. By walking through the activity (in this case, writing 1-2 questions you want to ask Jesus) and keeping that paper in your pocket provides a model for them to follow.

Breathe Out

Ask students to select one question from their list and to ask a wise person they trust for their answer this coming week.