

An Introduction

Those of us who will be teaching the *Horizons* Bible study this year should have one goal—to bring ourselves and those we teach into an encounter with God’s Word. With that goal in mind, we should use the best possible ways of teaching. We all know that lecture is the most frequently used method for teaching adults—probably because it is a passive activity for the learners and requires the least preparation for the teacher. But does lecture alone accomplish teaching God’s Word as effectively as possible?

Learning in Seven Ways

In the last few years, researchers have studied the human brain extensively. The proof that not all brains function in exactly the same way prompted educators to look again at why people respond in varying degrees to different methods of teaching.

The work of Howard Gardner has been especially helpful in this regard. According to his studies, people learn in at least seven different ways and each person’s brain has a preference for some ways over others. Based on Gardner’s work, educators now refer to “multiple intelligences” when speaking of how people learn best.

Reading words, listening to a voice or to music, solving puzzles, creating art, seeing a map, working with a craft—all of these represent ways of learning. The theory of multiple intelligences organizes this basic understanding into categories and suggests activities that appeal to each one. The chart “Seven Preferences for Learning and How to Use Them,” gives examples of each type.

Seven Preferences for Learning and How to Use Them

Learning Preference	Teaching Methods	Application of This Type
Verbal	writing, word games, choral readings, poetry, telling stories, debate, discussion	Lessons 2–4 and 6
Logical	charts/graphs, outlining, logical puzzles and activities, problem solving, having an agenda, tracing sequences of events	Lessons 1–2 and 5–7
Visual	costumes, maps, painting or drawing, colorful resources, videos, having a worship center	Lessons 1–9
Kinesthetic	crafts, creative movement, physical movement, sign language, objects to touch	Lessons 1–9
Musical	singing, listening to music, telling a story with just sounds, creative songs, playing instruments, group singing	Lessons 5–7
Interpersonal	group projects, brainstorming, role-playing, giving feedback, interviews, group discussion	Lessons 2–4 and 7–9
Intrapersonal	individual study, journaling, meditation, reflection, centering prayer, private research	Lessons 2, 4 and 7

Note: Gardner has recently indicated two more “intelligences” or learning preferences. We will use this original list of seven.

Learn more about the use of multiple intelligences in teaching, in *7 Ways of Teaching the Bible to Adults* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 2000) and *Our Spiritual Brain* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 2002)—both by Barbara Bruce (published by Abingdon Press)—and *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* by Thomas Armstrong (Alexandria, Va.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2000).

Resources to Use with What She Said

The Suggestions for Leaders included in the 2004–2005 *Horizons* Bible study, *What She Said: Quotable Women in Scripture*, offer a basic lesson plan for each session. This supplement to the Suggestions for Leaders complements those lesson plans by providing activities for every lesson that appeal to several of the learning preferences. (Note: Permission for use is limited to Bible study sessions, circle meetings, workshops or other events that use or promote the use of *What She Said*.) You will probably not have time to do all the suggested activities in a single lesson, so take time to select the ones best suited to your participants and time allotment.

In addition, you will find instructions for making a “take home” resource for each lesson. You may want to prepare these items prior to the lesson, and make them available for distribution at the end of the session. Or consider having group members make their own resources during the sessions. For some in your group, the simple act of taking something home or putting it in their Bible or study book will be reinforcement for learning. Others will enjoy and use the materials in more direct ways that will continue to enhance the lessons for them.

Take time to look through all of the material provided here and decide what you will use. Think ahead to what you will need. Can you print out the resource material yourself or do you need to find someone else to do it? Do you have access to a copier? Your church office might be able to do the copying for you or you may need to find a copy shop. Is a member of your group willing to take over all or part of this preparation?

If different people teach each session, you will need to share the resources. Divide the resources into envelopes for each lesson and distribute them among the leaders.

Finally, consider tying all the lessons together through a theme song—one song that you can use to start or close each session. Music is an important learning tool for many people, and the repetition of a single song each time helps to reinforce the unity of the study. I strongly recommend “Thy Word,”* which is a great song to focus us on God’s Word as the provider of direction for our lives, or “Go with Us, Lord.”**

* from *Lift Up Your Hearts: Songs for Creative Worship*. Linda White, editor. Louisville, Ky.: Geneva, 1999.

** from *The Presbyterian Hymnal*. Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1990.

Weave It All Together***

As an added activity for the study of *What She Said*, your group could choose to make a weaving. You could create the loom, string it, and then bring it to every session. Add fabric, ribbon, paper, or whatever you choose each time you meet, with your group completing the weaving at the last lesson. You may also choose to do the entire weaving during the last session as a conclusion to the study.

You may have a member of your group who would enjoy taking the leadership in this project. She may even have her own ideas about how to set it up. If so, you could have a very exciting finished product!

However, the finished product is never the primary goal in a learning project. Creating a weaving as part of your study employs another means of hands-on involvement with the concepts of the lessons. This project calls for group members to consider and choose one or more visual representations for each woman in the study. Weave together all of those pieces for a beautiful finished piece.

There are several ways to create a weaving.

Use a Picture Frame for a Loom

You will need an 11" x 14" sturdy wooden frame with the glass removed. Place small nails, spaced half an inch apart, along the top and bottom of the frame. Wind heavy gold cord* or narrow gold ribbon vertically around the nails to create the warp threads. These threads represent God's constant presence in all our stories—an integral part of any pattern we weave.

For the weft threads (the horizontal ones that create the pattern), your group should consider what colors, fabric, textures, and materials might represent the women in this study. You may want to print the names of the women on a solid colored ribbons or strips of paper. You also may invite women in your group to write the names of women who have influenced them on paper or ribbon and weave these in also. If you do, use a fabric pen or an ultra-fine point permanent marker so that the ink will not bleed. You might also choose to add a symbolic element, like stalks of wheat for Ruth and Naomi. Whatever you weave in and out of the warp threads, you will find that God's presence (represented by the gold cord) is always visible. When the weaving is complete and removed from the loom, the golden cords will hold its shape.

* If you have trouble finding gold cord in your town, it is available from the Container Store, 800/733-3532 or www.containerstore.com, SKU #639335.

Use Two Branches or Curtain Rods

Create a simpler weaving with two branches (or sticks) or curtain rods at the top and bottom. Tie gold ribbon evenly between the top and bottom to create the warp. Then weave in the weft threads, as described above. The weaving remains on your makeshift loom and you can hang the entire assemblage.

*** Special thanks to Annadell Teems for this idea.