



Discussion Activities for Preteens

Preteens are full of comments, questions, and ideas. Capitalize on these characteristics by using discussion activities in Sunday School.

Why use discussion activities? Discussing an idea or event gives opportunity for students to apply the Bible lessons to their lives. Discussion activities involve students in talking as they learn. This helps the students express their ideas about the subject and how they relate to it.

Ideas for Discussion Activities

Neighbor Nudging

The students briefly discuss a question with their neighbors. Then volunteers express their thoughts to the whole group.

Buzz Groups

Divide the class into groups of three to five children. Give each group a question or topic to discuss. Let a spokesperson for each group summarize what his group discussed.

Questions and Answers

Use thought-provoking questions, such as, "Do you think some sins are worse than others? Why?"

Brainstorming

Let the students quickly give as many answers as they can

about the issue. Then discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each answer.

Reflection

Give each student several minutes to think about and/or write out his ideas about a stated topic. Then let volunteers present their thoughts to the group.



Resource Person

A guest presents his experience or knowledge of an issue or topic. Then the students may ask questions and make comments.

When to Use Discussion Activities

Discussion activities can be used during most segments of the Sunday School class. They can be used to draw the students into the theme of the lesson. Used during the offering, prayer, and praise, they can help students focus on the theme.

You can use discussion before, during, and after the Bible lesson. Keep this short during the lesson so it doesn't detract them from the lesson.

Life illustration stories provide opportunities for discussion. Leave a story unfinished, and let the students discuss what will happen. You may ask a student to share an experience he has had that relates to the topic.

Create Good Discussion Activities

Plan the Discussion

For short discussions, this means writing a suitable question and deciding where to use it. For longer discussions, outline the points you wish to cover, jot down leading questions, and research background information.

Guide the Discussion

If no one says anything, ask a leading question or make an

open-ended comment. If the discussion is leading into a corner, redirect it. Draw out quiet students and encourage students who are too talkative to give others a chance to speak. Conclude the discussion when the students are finished and/or when a satisfactory conclusion has been reached.

Ask Good Questions

Good questions require full-

sentence, original answers. They have several options instead of one right answer.

Ask the Question *Before* You Call on a Student

If you call a name first, the other children may tune out what you say. Tailor your questions to your students. Ask harder questions of more mature students. Ask simpler questions of less mature students.

Be Accepting of the Students

Try to avoid saying, "That's wrong." If you must restate an answer, do it with positive comments to the student, such as, "I'm glad you're thinking. Would you like to tell me why you think that?" Then lead him to see a better alternative to his incorrect answer.

Questions for Further Study—

1. Why are discussion activities important for preteens?

2. When are good times to use discussion activities?

3. What makes a *good* discussion activity?



Radiant Life

This is just one of the many articles that are a click away on the Radiant Life website. Use the Radiant Life site as your teaching resource—24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Come visit us at www.radiantlife.org.