

Bible Study Guide Orientation

Objective

Encourage personal spiritual growth within Eastridge members and guests using the Bible Study Guide in a critical thinking approach often called the "Socratic method" of teaching:

- Build faith in God through bible knowledge and application
- Create hope by defining, building and maintaining healthy relationships with God, Jesus the Christ, the Holy Spirit, family, friends and others
- Define and know love (agape) through a passion for personal ministry to and from others

Background and Relevance

1. Job

Background: Job is challenged by God to think critically about who he (Job) was in relationship to God

Scripture: Job 38:1 – 42:6

Conclusion: Self examination originated with God

2. Socrates

Background: A Greek teacher who lived from 470 B.C. to 399 B.C.

Reference: The Socratic method is found in the writings of one of his famous students: Plato. See reference section below. Socrates never wrote a book. He was executed for denying the "gods of the state".

Conclusion: Plato/Socrates simply documented one of God's methods of helping us to develop our own faith and spiritual life

3. Jesus

Background: Jesus often answered questions with a question more than 200 times in the gospels. Scripture: A few examples

- "Who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15)
- "What sort of man is this?" (Matthew 8:27)
- "What do you think about the Christ, whose Son is He?" (Matthew 22:42)
- "Do You Know What I Have Done to You?" John 13:12
- "Could You Not Watch One Hour?" Matthew 26:40
- "Will He Find Faith on Earth?" Luke 18:8
- "Who is my Mother?" Matthew 12:48
- "What Do You Seek?" John 1:38
- "Who do you say I am?" Luke 9:20

Conclusion: Jesus challenged his disciples and his detractors to come to their own conclusion about who He truly was. We must answer the same question today.

Main Concepts

1. BSG is, as the name implies, a "guide" to bible study. Rarely (if ever) should an attempt be made to cover every section of a specific lesson plan.
2. BSG class should not be seen as a "lecture" or a simplistic "Q and A" session, but as a time of critical thinking leading to personal application based on the key and supporting bible text
 - a. note that the "application" section of the lesson plan asked that the student to respond with "I or me" not in an ambiguous third person "they" or "some people"
 - b. generally questions should be open ended vs. "yes or no" except where affirmation is required
 - c. BSG is bible based. Reference to non-inspired writers should be minimized and kept in context
3. BSG can best be used in an environment of scriptural open-ended questions (Socratic method) to stimulate personal spiritual growth and to link the new concept to previous personal experience or learning
 - a. Small Class (25 or less) works well and allows most to openly engage in discussion
 - b. Large Class (25 or more) may require a adjustment based on student response and willingness to participate but not dominate the class discussion
 - c. **IMPORTANT:** Conclusion of class: Teacher **always** provides a biblical example of the application using the class discussion to validate as much as possible. Sometimes called "qualified consensus" which means the teacher brings the application to a functional level.

Warning: Not every class member will relate well to critical self examination. Questions should never be directed to a particular member of the class except in response to a question or comment by that individual.

Resources for Socratic Method

This information is for background and understanding of teaching using a critical thinking method.

There is no intention to create an academic model for use in our bible classes.

"Developed from Plato's Socratic Dialogues, the Socratic method of teaching is a student centered approach that challenges learners to develop their critical thinking skills and engage in analytic discussion. The Socratic method can be used at any grade level and with all subject areas, and lessons can be adapted to fit a changing society."

<http://www.learnnc.org/lp/pages/4994>