

U. I teach a 10th grade boys' Sunday school class. Every week it's a challenge because all they want to do is play. Any suggestions for keeping them focused on the lesson?

As a 10th-grader myself, I'd suggest that you follow what they do...incorporate games and play into your lessons. This way, they'll remember it more because they're having fun. If they're being forced and not having fun, no matter what you do they won't remember your lesson, and it would have all been in vain. If you can't incorporate games, then I would make it a prize. For example, if the class memorizes a certain amount of verses, they can have the next Sunday to just have fun. Remember, there are plenty of games out there that incorporate the Bible—just use them to your advantage.

JOYCE KANG Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania

1. Pray. A phrase I've come to believe is "Prayer is the work. The rest is just follow-up." You need to pray to the Lord that the students would become hungry and desire to grow deeper with God. Also remember that Satan doesn't want your students to learn.

2. Think. Think back to when you were in 10th grade. What interests did you have? What was your world about? Use that as a launching pad for discussions. Think of how antsy you were at that age.

3. Ask and listen. Ask them what's going on in their lives. What are their main concerns? If they hit you with silence or a grunt, start listing off areas they deal with: "What's your biggest struggle at school?" "If you could ask God one question, what would it be?"—and so on. There are many good books on discussion starters.

4. Listen. A student once asked me, "How do you keep coming up with things to teach about?" I said, "Watching your life gives me plenty of things to teach about." Students, if they respect you, will open up to you in their own way. Learn to hear them and listen to the hints they give you.

5. Creativity. Be creative by using object lessons and good, intriguing questions.

6. Example. If you're walking with the Lord and are setting a good example, they'll admire that. "Youth are drawn to the oldest person who will take them seriously."—T. Lang

Praying for you and your boys...

JEFF KORHORN Niles, Michigan

Try making your classes more interactive. If they have to do something in the class, they won't have time to goof off. Create a skit or game to go with the lesson—whatever it takes to get the message through to them. If you keep them entertained, they'll pay attention and get more out of it.

MARK WILLIS Dayton, Ohio

Have a huge Snickers one day. When the first person participates—for example, reads, answers a question, and so on—throw him the candy bar and say, "Thanks, Joe, I appreciate that." They'll want to participate just in case you have another surprise. Just don't do it every time.

PAM SCOTT Sulphur Springs, Texas

HANDS-ON HELP: YOUTH

LOUNGE WIZARD

Grab a couple of couches, a coffee table, a lamp, and a throw rug, and create a lounge in the corner of your meeting room. Make it nice enough that teenagers will actually want to "loungue around" in it. You can put it to use in a variety of fun ways:

● **Guest lounge**—At the end of your program, invite first-time guests to join you in the lounge, along with some members of your team and key students.

● **VIP lounge**—Use the lounge as an incentive for bringing friends or as a gathering place to celebrate special occasions, such as birthdays. Each week, a group of students gets to sit in the VIP lounge during the program. Stock a cooler there with snacks and drinks.

● **Prayer lounge**—Set the lounge apart as a place students go for prayer or encouragement. Have a few volunteers hanging out to listen and pray for teenagers.