

TECHNIQUES;

They are only a device to stimulate and promote reaction, discussion, and thinking. They should never become the answer to a teacher's prayer. They are only as good as you.

- *1. Ritual--ever since the history of people began, there has been ritual. It is brought about by people giving special meaning(s) to common, everyday occurrences. Often they can contain great symbolism or be completely self-expressive. In a Relig class a name, person, or event can take on a special meaning when discussed explained, or presented as part of a ritual. (Useful for developing self-respect & self awareness).
- *2. Continuum--It is used to break down either/or thinking. It takes a problem which usually splits people into two over-simplified camps and opens it up to show a wide range of intellectually defensible positions. In a relig class it can provoke thought, questions, and reaction when a student has to make a decision and take a place on the continuum. (Useful to discuss various moral and religious issues, especially with situationalists).
3. Rank-order--it gets at propities. They help put choices in proper perspective with possible alternatives. Ask students to rank order 3 items, people, or actions on the same general topic. Ask them to give reasons for their choices. (Useful to discuss topics where the students are against the decisions of church or civil authorities).
- *4. Role-playing--it is an active, dramatic involvement of the student in a concrete situation of the problem/situation under discussion, evoking an awareness of the human conditions involved in the issue. (Useful on such topics as generation gap, Sunday Mass, dating, the lonely person in the crowd, and classroom confrontation to name a few examples). Ask the students who role-play for their reactions first, then ask the other members of the group to react. This often leads to discussion. Often you can repeat the situation and/or change roles for the three people, or use different people.
- *5. Guest-Speakers--this enables the students to obtain first hand information for future discussions. Be sure to bring your guest speakers in when you are into a particular subject area. Speak with them first--informing them of the make-up of the class, and do give them a direction in which to aim. Prepare the students, by suggesting or making up questions in advance. (Great on any topic).
6. Collages--this enables the students to make value-judgements on a particular theme, because it forces them to place either either pictures/words/phrases on a piece of poster board and then explain why such a selection was made. (Useful for subjects such as friendship, church, christianity, Jesus, Mass, eucharist, generation gap, etc.)
7. Research--have one student or a small group research (use library resources), or tape an interview on a particular subject. Good use on ecumenical movement, race relations, draft, etc.
8. Survey--is an opportunity for the class member to investigate what a given group's opinions and attitudes are on a given issue, by means of a questionnaire answered by a representative sampling of the group or by the entire group. (Issues to be covered are war, sexuality, drinking, mass changes, changes in the church, feeling

8. (con't) towards sacraments).

- *9. Devil's Advocate--where the teacher or discussion leader takes a position contrary to that of the class or to what the class would expect the teacher to take, in order to provoke, stimulate, discussion eg. Your baptism was something forced on you by your parents? God is dead, or else there would be no wars. You can take the position yourself in class or if you are afraid read the comment or position and tell the students you think it is interesting--go on from there.
10. Article(s)--read one page or paragraph from an article that you studied and use as a stimulation to discussion. (Be sure the vocabulary is understandable by the students). Also (prepare questions on the subject area). Articles can be taken from contemporary magazines or newspapers.
11. Reaction cards--ask students to give a reaction to a audio-visual aid on an index card in one sentence or two. Collect the cards and read a few at random. Gives the group an immediate reaction and doesn't force anyone person to reveal feelings on a sensitive subject.
12. Art-Illustration--bring in one of the many posters to be found in the Relig office, in contemporary magazines, or from collages you have made yourself--prepare questions for the motivation--ask students to react either verbally or non-verbally.
13. Drawing--great form of non-verbal expression on such important topics as God, Jesus, Church. Ask Students to draw their concepts of a subject, then ask for explanations. (great for 9-12).
14. Use of film/filmstrip--great means of provoking discussion on a particular situation. Be such to preview the materials in advance. Have questions drawn up, and follow through. A film/filmstrip can be a waste when not previewed, or when the teacher expects the students to carry on a discussion without direction. Available on any/every subject area.
15. Film-making you can stress a theme (love, fellowship, peace) by asking the students to film and then show their reaction to it. (Moving collage--if the equipment is available)
16. Records: can be helpful--always know the song well in advance, have the words available to the students, play the song, pose questions on the song (don't become upset if the students sing or dance to the song) it is up to you to direct the students sing or dance to the song) it is up to you to direct the students, often they simply listen to the beat and don't even become conscious of the words. Ask questions: does the beat set a mood, does it change, does it relate to the words. (pick out particular phrases for close examination.
17. Debate--is controlled argumentation on an explicit issue, primarily for the benefit of the group. Assign teams and rules of procedure, make sure that the issue is clear and debatable. eg. cigarette commercials should not have been banned from TV a boy and girl should wait until marriage to have sexual intercourse. Abortion laws should be repealed completely, plus many, many, many more. Allow time for questions from the rest of the class.

18. Interview/Survey: an investigation of what the opinions and attitudes of a given group are on a given issue by means of asking many questions of one person, chosen as a representative of the group. Otherwise, ask one question of many different people and try to develop a consensus.
e.g. church - priest, nun, parent, classmate, college student
drink - cop, bartender, priest, alcoholic, parent, classmate, liquor distributor
drugs - psychologist, cop, doctor, addict, social worker, student.
19. Panel Discussion: this is an opportunity for the class to hear various speakers present to the class and discuss with one another various viewpoints on the same issue. (the class can use its own members to do the same thing).
e.g. - a Lutheran minister, parent, Buddhist monk, rabbi, priest could discuss prayer.
20. Visual Book - form a book of any shape or size using pictures, slogans, color and good design, taking an already existing magazine or booklet and pasting over it is very easy.
sample topics: themes of communication, freedom, love, peace, life.
21. Searching Experience: visiting institutions in the city such as AA meeting, court, evening court, youth court, family court, hospital, jewish temple, protestant church, renaissance, etc.
22. Associations: exercise class in free association on particular emotion filled topics e.g. drinking or marijuana. Have students write down the first phrase that comes into their minds. Compare results for shared association.
23. Comics: students can create their own characters or original senses, or use peanuts, jules feiffer, the wizard of id, Mary Worth, etc. to get an understand theological points.
24. Community Action Projects: such as tutoring, working as volunteers in the hospital, or acting as a big brother/big sister, helping the elderly; visiting the homes for the aged can help students experience the christian dimension of the gospel more clearly.
25. Para-liturgical Services - to summarize a particular theme. It is a good idea to put together a selection of different songs, prayers, spontaneous prayers, visual effects, along with a candle for atmosphere and lead the students to refine and finalize ideas in their heads.
e.g. a short service on friendship, penance, love, etc.
26. Class MASS: a good way to help your students to appreciate the intrinsic worth and beauty of the mass. Hold a discussion on the mass (possibly use the continuum or ranking order) in order to elicit their opinions on the mass. Follow this up with a guest speaker on the mass - preferably a priest. If students are agreeable, have them prepare a theme, songs, prayers (have them search the New Testament - many for the first time - prepare a place, time, bread, wine for the mass celebration. Try to obtain the services of the same priest as speaker to celebrate the mass. Try to have a buffet supper or pizza party after the mass.

Be sure to follow up this celebration with a discussion on the mass - be sure to point out that the mass is the same, it is just the externals that may make it more personal.

27. Baptism, Confirmation Services - have students discuss the meaning of these sacraments in their lives (maybe you will have to be devil's advocate to spark discussion), show film on baptism, etc. (filmstrip also) and after discussion on third or fourth week - renew baptismal vows or confirmation rite. Why not observe a baptism at the church some Sunday.

28. YOU - be alive in class

Your should know all your students by name.

If they are absent for an extended period of time (one week), try to call them - this shows great interest.

Prepare classes as if you were the student. Ask yourself the following questions:

Would I sit through this class?

Would I learn anything new on this subject?

Is the presentation interesting?

Would/could I prepare better?

Am I sensitive to the needs of my students?

Am I talking my student's language?

Be yourself in class - allow the students to trust and be with you as a person, human being, fellow son/daughter of Jesus. A phoney is spotted a mile away.

Obstacles to Class: Silence: sometimes the students need a period of time to think...after a subject has been presented. Wait, be patient, reaction will come. If silence is extended, and you have the trust of the group, ask them why, "quiet isn't it". Hopefully they will react. If not, move onto the next point. Maybe you have hit upon a heated topic and all are afraid to start talking. It may lead to bad feelings, etc. Ask them, and try to control the reactions. If the topic appears to be boring, ask them why and then analyze.

Apathy - the students can be bored - the teacher may be talking too much, or one student can be overpowering the others, the material may be very dull, it may be irrelevant to their lives...MOVE ON.

If one individual is apathetic, try to draw him/her into the discussion. Don't force him/her into a position...you may lose him/her forever.

Otherwise, ask a question...Jim/Sue, I was wondering if you see any connection to this.....

If he/she answers yes/no and stops, don't press the issue -- but do give him/her time-----be patient.

Group Leader - he/she talks all the time--try to win her over by friendship. Use him/her as an aid to discussion..but be careful you don't rely on him/her too much..at the expense of the rest of the class.

Blocking Tactics - he/she is usually negative to everything in class he/she requires patience and ingenuity...try to get him/her to do something; possibly take the lead in a discussion or a debate.

If he/she becomes totally out of line, talk with him/her privately after class.

Hidden Agenda - if the class blows up, try to tap their feelings at time, maybe skip the lesson, and talk about feelings and then go back to the lesson -- only after the air has cleared.

Disruptive Student - He/she may be bored --need more stimulation in the class or in private research. He/she may be looking for attention --try to win him over by providing some extra time after class or during the week. Much good can be done by showing your concern. He/she may be testing you to find out if you are real--don't fly off the handle (yet justifiable anger at rare occasions can be very effective) be firm but be patient. You can have a miserable class if you allow the disruptive person to ruin your equilibrium.

Never throw a person out of class--unless you have notified the hall aid, so that the center director can talk out the problem, if possible. Never resort to physical violence--you are only adding to what the student may expect of/from you.

The best solution to a problem in class is a so totally prepared class with many techniques (not just time wasters) that the students are too occupied and too busy learning to cause problems. Knowing how to phrase questions and how to bounce back if a section flops is an important part of being a good Relig teacher.

ABOVE ALL, LOVE THESE KIDS, TAKE A PERSONAL INTEREST IN THEM. WILL THEY CALL YOU IF THEY HAVE A PROBLEM, AND NEED HELP? DO THEY HAVE YOUR PHONE NUMBER? DO YOU KNOW THEIR BIRTHDAYS? ARE YOU GIVING YOUR STUDENTS A MESSAGE OF JESUS OR ARE YOU GIVING THEM A SOCIOLOGY, PSYCHOLOGICALLY ORIENTED GAME, OR WHAT?

BE FIRM, BELIEVE, WORK HARD, AND LOVE, AND YOU ARE THE GREATEST TECHNIQUE.