

THE ART OF ASKING GOOD QUESTIONS:



QUESTIONS TO ASK OURSELVES



BEFORE - THE PREP

- Instead of “What am I going to say?” try “What do they need to learn?”
- Fill in the blank: the purpose of this lesson is to help the students feel/understand/do _____ ?
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DURING - THE ASK

Less helpful:

- Can this question be answered with a “yes”/”no”?
- Am I looking for a specific answer?
- Am I telling learners something they could generate on their own?
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More helpful:

- Am I inviting learners to share experiences, testimony, or connections they’ve made?
- Am I trusting learners to receive inspiration and edify each other?
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AFTER - THE RESPONSE

- Have I given learners enough time to process the question?
- Do I need to restate or rephrase the question?
- How would I respond to this answer if it were a personal conversation with a friend?
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In the past, we may have thought of teaching as a chance for a parent or teacher to invite the Spirit into their own preparation and then share what they have learned with children or class members, whose role it has been to listen. But even more effective is when we, as learners, also come prepared and when teachers create learning experiences that foster personal revelation directly to our hearts and minds.

Chad Webb, Sunday School General Presidency, “That All May Be Edified,” October 2025

I would like to talk about the trust required for teachers to allow their students to use agency to deepen learning and personal conversion...I hope we can see our students the way that God sees them, recognizing that the power is in them and that from God’s vantage point we are all capable of learning when given equal opportunities to act and use our agency.

Nephi teaches that the power of agency is that it allows us to act for ourselves and not be acted upon. Are our classroom settings ones that allow students to act and take ownership for their learning, or are they passive environments where students are simply acted upon as they quietly listen? If someone visited your classroom this week, would they see students being given opportunity to engage in the learning process? It is difficult to invite diligent learning if we don’t allow students to share their own insights, inspiration, and observe truths.

Clark Gilbert, CES Commissioner, “The Power Is In Them,” January 2025

Elder Kim B. Clark invited us to consider not just what and how we teach but also how we might focus more on the learner and on the process and outcomes of learning. He invited us to ask ourselves, “What experiences do my students need in order to increase their power and capacity to learn deeply?”...

Elder David A. Bednar gave us a remarkable example of what it looks like to be learner-focused in our most recent Evening with a General Authority. It was obvious that his intent was not to tell us something but for us to learn something. He asked questions, observed, and listened to be sure that we understood. He also taught us how he approaches teaching when he said, “Instead of thinking, ‘What am I going to tell them?’ the focus should be, ‘What would I ask them?’...”

Renowned Professor and Rabbi Jacob Neusener once said, “Great teachers don’t teach. They help students learn.”...

Our role as teachers is to help students cultivate a desire to learn; receive personal revelation; and discover, understand, and live the truth they have acquired for themselves. It is not simply to dispense the knowledge we have acquired from our own study or experience. And we must remember that what seems relevant to us may not be as meaningful to our students, who are in a different stage of life. So we really need to listen to them, be observant, and pray for discernment.

Chad Webb, Seminaries & Institutes Administrator, “We Have Not Come This Far to Only Come This Far,” June 2020