Teaching Well

Preparing to teach God's Word to students at The Summit Church

> What this is. A short course for the people who teach our students on Sundays and Wednesdays. Ten sessions, one page each, plus the planner you will use every week and the example sermon notes the sessions work from. It is not a course in writing sermons or theology: the content is given to you. This is about carrying it well, studying it, shaping it for your students, and leading them toward a faithful response to God's Word.

The workshop, and where things are

Time	Session	Page
9:00	1 Your job as a teacher	3
9:15	2 Know your room	4
9:30	3 Read the notes and find the one thing	5
9:45	4–5 Questions 1 and 2	6–7
10:05	Break	
10:15	6–8 Questions 3, 4, and 5	8–10
10:35	9 Fit it to your time and your age group	11
10:45	10 Teach it well: delivery and discussion	12
10:57	Next steps and prayer	13

Also in this guide: the Five Questions chart (p. 2); the weekly planner and a completed example (p. 13–14); a Wednesday example (p. 15); questions teachers ask, a glossary, and the observer feedback form (p. 16–18); coaching one another (p. 19); the example sermon notes (p. 20–21).

After the workshop

Plan one real lesson on the planner (p. 13). Practice three minutes of it with another leader. Teach it with an observer if you can. Debrief with the feedback form (p. 18), and ask a student the one thing on the way out.

> Missed the workshop, or want to review? Each session is a short video at thesummit.life, and this guide works the same way. If Sunday is in five days, take sessions 1 and 3, read the passage, fill in the planner, and teach it. The sermon notes are available to download each week.

The Five Questions

Ask these of every lesson before you teach it. Answer all five and you have a lesson.

	The question	What it does	Ask yourself
1	Why do they need to know it? Motivation	Opens the lesson with a reason to listen. Creates tension the passage will resolve.	What question do I want my students to want answered? Where does the world get this wrong?
2	What do they need to know? Information	States one truth from the passage, shows where it lives in the text, supports it with two or three points.	If they remember one sentence, which one? Which verses hold it up? What words need defining?
3	What do they need to do? Application	Names a response that grows out of the passage: action, prayer, trust, repentance, or rethinking a belief.	What could a student in my group actually do before next week? What about a student still exploring faith?
4	Why do they need to do it? Inspiration	Gives the reason from the passage: God's character, grace, a promise, a command, or a warning.	What would it look like if every student in the room did this? What is my last sentence?
5	What can I do to help them remember? Memorization	Gives them something to carry: a phrase, a picture, an object. Checks that they can explain it.	What is the handle? What two questions will show me whether they have it?

> Before the five: pray, read the passage in context, and study the notes until you can say the main idea in one sentence.
>
> After the five: cut to your time, plan the clock, rehearse out loud, and teach. Then ask about the response next week.

Ezra 7:10 — "Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel."

Session 1: Your Job as a Teacher

1 Corinthians 14:3; John 1:20; 1 Corinthians 3:6–7 · Also as video 1 (1:50) at thesummit.life

The point

- Four things are in the room: you, your students, the occasion, and the Holy Spirit. You can prepare for the first three. The fourth is not yours to control, and that takes the weight off.
- You are responsible to be faithful. You are not responsible for the results.
- The target every week: build up, help, encourage (1 Corinthians 14:3). If a lesson does none of the three, it was information, not teaching.
- On Sundays you teach from the pastor's notes; on Wednesdays, a curriculum. That is John the Baptist's job: "I am not the Christ." You are not the Savior. You point students to Him.

Try it

In one sentence: what do I hope my students come to understand about Jesus this year? This becomes your filter for every cut you make later.

Talk about it

1. Where does the pressure of teaching usually land for you: preparing, the room, or the results? Which of those is actually yours?
2. Read 1 Corinthians 3:5–9 together. What does Paul say the planter and the waterer are? What does that free you from, and what does it not excuse?
3. When has a lesson "done nothing" visibly and still mattered? How would you know?

Wrap-up

- Faithfulness is yours. Results are God's.
- Build, help, encourage.
- Be clear. Be prepared. Point to Jesus.

> Carry this: You plant and water. God gives the growth.

Session 2: Know Your Room

Mark 4:33; 1 Corinthians 9:22 · Also as video 2 (2:37) at thesummit.life

The point

- Jesus spoke the word "as they were able to hear it." Fishermen got fish; farmers got seed. The truth never changed; the way they carried it changed every time.
- Elementary: concrete thinkers, take words literally, need to move, one idea at a time. Middle school: working out who they are, want to be taken seriously, have questions they won't ask aloud. High school: can handle the hard parts, want the why, can tell when a teacher isn't real.
- Sunday is more formal with less time; Wednesday is casual and built around discussion. Same students, different job.
- The week matters. Knowing your students is a question you ask before you plan: what are they walking in with?

Try it

Three specific things my students are dealing with this month (no names in the group), and one adjustment I will make the next time I teach.

Talk about it

1. Pick one illustration from the example notes (p. 20). Would it land with your group as written? What would you swap it for?
2. Where do you tend to teach the students in your head instead of the ones in the room?
3. How should Sunday and Wednesday feel different for your students, and how do you prepare differently?

Wrap-up

- Same passage, different rooms, and that is right.
- Starting points, not limits.
- Write three things your students are dealing with before you touch the notes.

> Carry this: Speak the Word as they are able to hear it.

Session 3: Read the Notes and Find the One Thing

Ezra 7:10; 2 Timothy 2:15; Nehemiah 8:8; Psalm 119:18 · Also as video 3 (2:36) at thesummit.life

The point

- Study, do, then teach (Ezra 7:10). Not reading it to them; giving the sense (Nehemiah 8:8).
- Pray. Read the passage itself first; the notes serve the text. Then read the notes three times: once for the flow, once with a pen marking main points from support, once for the one sentence.
- Write that sentence at the top of your page. Everything you keep has to serve it.
- Example, John 1:19–28: if a sixth grader remembers one sentence, it is "John's job is our job: point people to Jesus." If you get stuck, the Application section is written last but is the reason the sermon exists.

Try it

From the John 1:19–28 notes (p. 20): the one sentence a student could repeat, and the two or three verses that hold it up.

Talk about it

1. Read John 1:19–28 aloud. What do you notice before you open the notes that the notes then confirm or sharpen?
2. Compare main sentences around the table. Where they differ, which is closer to what the passage actually says?
3. What is the difference between a teacher who studied and one who skimmed, from a student's seat?

Wrap-up

- Passage before notes. Notes three times. One sentence at the top.
- The one thing must come from the text.
- Students can tell the difference between a teacher who studied and one who skimmed.

> Carry this: Study it. Do it. Then teach it.

Session 4: Question 1: Why Do They Need to Know It?

Luke 10:25–37; Ecclesiastes 12:11; Acts 8:30 · Also as video 4 (2:46) at thesummit.life

The point

- A lawyer asked "Who is my neighbor?" and Jesus answered with a story, so that by the time the Samaritan knelt in the dirt the whole crowd was leaning in. He made them want the answer before He gave it.
- Your opening has about ninety seconds. Show a real problem, promise that the Word has an answer, and hold the answer back for a minute. If they aren't convinced they need this, everything after it sounds like trivia.
- Example, John 1:19–28: "you do not recognize a person you are not expecting." The sixth-grade version: looking for your mom's car and looking right past your dad.
- Example, John 1:14: Grover running back and forth, near and far. God, who seemed far, came near. That one works for a seven-year-old as-is.

Try it

For my group: the question I want students to want answered, and the situation or problem I will use to raise it.

Talk about it

1. What is the difference between an opening that gets attention and one that creates a need? Give an example of each.
2. How would you adapt the John 1:19–28 opening for your age group?
3. When does an opening go wrong: too long, too clever, or a problem the passage doesn't actually answer?

Wrap-up

- Brief opening; the Word gets the time.
- Tension the passage will resolve.
- Write the question you want them to want answered.

> Carry this: Make them hungry before you feed them.

Session 5: Question 2: What Do They Need to Know?

2 Peter 1:20–21; Acts 17:11; John 20:31; Luke 24:27; Nehemiah 8:8 · Also as video 5 (3:31) at thesummit.life

The point

- A seventh grader asks, "Why does it say that?" If you know your point but not the passage, you freeze. If what you teach is not what the text says, you have handed them something that is not God's Word. Your students should be able to check you against the text (Acts 17:11).
- Four ways to know a passage: read what comes before and after; ask what the author is doing (John 20:31); watch the words where the notes slow down; put it in the story of the whole Bible (Luke 24:27).
- Example: John 1:14, "dwelt," is the tent word: the God who lived in a tent in Exodus now lives in a body. John 1:18, "made him known": Jesus is God's explanation of Himself.
- Then say it in one sentence and show the verse it lives in. The Information section is not there to be read aloud; it is there so you understand the passage well enough to answer the seventh grader.

Try it

From the notes (p. 20): my main idea, the verses that support it, and one place where the notes slow down on a word or cross-reference that I can explain to a student.

Talk about it

1. Find one place in the John 1:19–28 notes where the pastor slows down. Why is it there? Could you explain it to a seventh grader?
2. What does John 20:31 tell you about every passage in John? How does that shape what you emphasize?
3. When have you heard a verse taught in a way that ignored its context? What changed when the context was restored?

Wrap-up

- Context, author, words, whole story.
- Read the verses around the passage before you read the notes.
- Find where the notes slow down and be able to explain it.

> Carry this: Teach what the passage says, not what you wish it said.

Session 6: Question 3: What Do They Need to Do?

James 1:22–25; Matthew 7:24–27 · Also as video 6 (2:08) at thesummit.life

The point

- James: a man looks in a mirror, walks away, and forgets what he looked like. "Be doers of the word, and not hearers only." The one who does the Word is blessed in his doing. Jesus ends the Sermon on the Mount the same way: two builders, and the only difference is doing.
- Start with the Application section and make it specific for your students. Not smaller. Specific.
- Example, John 1:19–28: one person who doesn't know Jesus, pray every day, share what Jesus has done. Elementary: name one friend, pray tonight with your family. Middle school: one person at school, pray every day, send one text. High school: one person, one real conversation this week. "Share your faith" is an idea. "Send one text" is something they can do.
- Call it homework. Say it out loud, write it on the board, do it yourself. Then, the step most of us skip: ask about it next Sunday.

Try it

The response for my group this week, the verse it connects to, and what I will do to help them do it.

Talk about it

1. Take this week's application from the notes and write three versions: elementary, middle school, high school. What makes each one "specific" rather than "smaller"?
2. What response would fit a student in your room who does not yet believe? (See "Questions teachers ask," p. 16.)
3. What happens in a group when the teacher asks about last week's homework three weeks in a row?

Wrap-up

- Specific, not smaller.
- Call it homework; do it yourself.
- Ask about it next week.

> Carry this: Hearers forget. Doers remember.

Session 7: Question 4: Why Do They Need to Do It?

Hebrews 12:2; Galatians 6:9 · Also as video 7 (2:11) at thesummit.life

The point

- Think about the last time a student did something hard for God. What got them there? Not a warning. Fear wears off by Tuesday. What moves a student is a picture of what could be true.
- Look at how Scripture moves people. Jesus endured the cross "for the joy that was set before him." "In due season we will reap." God holds a promise out in front of His people and pulls them toward it.
- Ask: what would it look like if every student in this room did this? Then answer it out loud. Students will work hard toward a picture of what God could do; they will not work hard to avoid a warning.
- End on a line that lifts. Example, John 1:14–18: it could have ended "stop trying to fix yourself"; it ended "You do not have to run to God. In Jesus, God ran to you." The last thing you say is the thing they keep.

Try it

If every one of my students did this week's response, what would our group look like in a month? And my closing sentence, written before I stand up.

Talk about it

1. Read Hebrews 12:1–2. What moved Jesus to endure the cross? What does that tell you about how God motivates?
2. Think of a lesson you remember from years ago. Did it end on a warning or a promise? Which do you carry?
3. What is the difference between a promise God actually makes and an outcome we hope for? Why does it matter with students?

Wrap-up

- Picture, not pressure.
- Write the picture of your group in a month.
- Know your last sentence before you stand up.

> Carry this: Hold out a promise, not a warning.

Session 8: Question 5: What Can I Do to Help Them Remember?

Joshua 4:6–7; Deuteronomy 6:6–9 · Also as video 8 (2:40) at thesummit.life

The point

- God stacked stones on the bank of the Jordan so that children would ask, "What do these stones mean?" He knew people forget. Deuteronomy 6: talk about these words when you sit and when you walk; write them on your doorposts.
- Choose one phrase, picture, or object that serves the passage, and make sure students understand the connection; an object can be unforgettable while the point gets lost.
- Example: an arrow. "What does an arrow do?" It points your attention somewhere else. John says he is not the Christ; he points to the One who is coming. The sentence to carry: "We point people to Jesus." Elementary make an arrow; middle school ask how to point attention to Jesus; high school ask what makes that hard.
- Then check that they have it: "What did John say that shows us this?" "What could this look like this week?" Give them time; if the answer misses, go back to the passage. Tie the reminder to the response. Send a note home with the passage and one question.

Try it

My reminder for this week, and the two questions I will ask: one that helps students explain the passage, one that helps them consider their response.

Talk about it

1. What is the difference between an object that is memorable and an object that teaches? Give an example of each.
2. For John 1:19–28, what handle would work for your age group? How would you check that students connect it to the passage?
3. What is one lesson you remember from childhood because of the handle?

Wrap-up

- One handle, explained.
- Check that they have it; an unclear answer tells you what to teach again.
- One reminder and two questions on the planner every week.

> Carry this: Give them a stone to carry.

Session 9: Fit It to Your Time and Your Age Group

John 20:30–31 · Also as video 9 (2:35) at thesummit.life

The point

- Parents are about to arrive and you still have two pages, so the application gets one sentence. The clock decided what got cut, and the clock always cuts the wrong thing.
- John: "Jesus did many other signs that are not written in this book... these are written so that you may believe." John chose. Faithfulness is choosing what serves the purpose and saying it well.
- The notes support 35–40 minutes; you have 15–20. What stays: the passage, your main sentence, the response, and the explanation students need. What goes first: commentary quotations, background students don't need ("the religious leaders investigating John" is enough), illustrations that don't fit. Define the words: "Christ" is a title, God's promised Messiah, not Jesus' last name.
- What never goes: the passage read out loud, the main point, the gospel: John points to Jesus, the Savior who died for our sins and rose again, and we trust Him. One way to plan twenty minutes: 2 open, 2 read, 7 explain with questions, 4 respond and pray, 3 discuss, 2 say it back and close. Talk it through out loud before Sunday and make the cut at your kitchen table.

Try it

From the notes (p. 20): what I will cut, what I will swap and for what, my time plan, and one supporting detail I can drop if I need to.

Talk about it

1. Compare cuts around the table for John 1:19–28. Did anyone cut something another teacher kept? Who is right for their room?
2. When have you run out of time and dropped the application? What would have prevented it?
3. Why is "the religious leaders" enough for most student rooms, and when would the distinctions help?

Wrap-up

- Cut on purpose, before Sunday.
- The skeleton: passage, point, response, handle.
- Plan time for students to think and respond, not just for you to finish talking.

> Carry this: Never cut the Word, the point, or the gospel.

Session 10: Teach It Well: Delivery and Discussion

Nehemiah 8:8; Proverbs 20:5; James 1:19; Proverbs 27:6 · Also as video 10 (2:50) at thesummit.life

The point

- You don't have to become a different person to teach. Speak clearly, know where you are going, pay attention to whether they are following. Before you begin, pray; ask God to do in their hearts what you cannot.
- Sunday, give the sense (Nehemiah 8:8): use your notes but look up; natural voice, loud enough for the back; slow down for an important verse; keep your main sentence in view; invite responses so you know they are with you.
- Wednesday, draw it out (Proverbs 20:5). "Was John the Christ?" checks a fact; "Why does John start by saying who he is not?" invites thinking. After you ask, wait (James 1:19). If nobody answers, point them to the verse or let them talk to a partner. When an answer misses, don't wince and don't rescue: "Let's look at what he says about himself." When you don't know, say so and follow up. When one student takes over, "Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken."
- Finish with the main idea and a clear next step. Then ask another leader for specific feedback (Proverbs 27:6). Final practice: teach three minutes from your planner to another leader; fix it; try again.

Try it

My practice plan: who I will teach three minutes to, and the one thing I most want feedback on.

Talk about it

1. Practice the wait. Ask the table a real question and count to seven in silence. What happened?
2. Role-play a wrong answer ("John was trying to get famous"). How do you bring it back to the text without embarrassing the student?
3. What is one delivery habit you want to change, and how will you know in a month whether you did?

Wrap-up

- Eyes up. Natural voice. Land it.
- Questions, wait, back to the verse.
- Prepare faithfully, listen to your students, trust God to give the growth.

> Carry this: Sunday, give the sense. Wednesday, draw it out.

Weekly Lesson Planner

If you can fill it in, you have a lesson.

Date _____ Passage _____ Group _____ Minutes _____

PREPARATION

☐ Prayed ☐ Read the passage in context ☐ Studied the notes ☐ Marked main idea and support ☐ Checked unclear points ☐ Rehearsed aloud

The one thing students should understand:

1. Why do they need to know it? Opening question or situation

2. What do they need to know? Main idea, supporting verses, words to define

3. What do they need to do? A response that fits the passage and the students

4. Why do they need to do it? The reason from the passage, and my closing sentence

5. What can I do to help them remember? Reminder and two questions

Time plan _____ Cut or adapt

_____

Question to follow up next time

_____

Completed Sample Planner: John 1:19–28

"A Voice in the Wilderness" | Middle school | 20 minutes | One worked example; yours may differ

The one thing

John points beyond himself to the coming Lord. We point people to Jesus.

1. Why do they need to know it?

Ask: "If someone asks what you believe, what makes talking about Jesus difficult?" Take two brief answers. Most of the pressure is about sounding impressive. Connect that to John: he did not pretend to be the Savior. He knew exactly who he was not.

2. What do they need to know?

Read John 1:19–28 aloud. Explain that John the Baptist is not the John who wrote this gospel. Religious leaders have come to question his identity and authority. "Christ" is a title: God's promised Messiah.

- **Verses 20–21:** John denies being the Christ, Elijah, or the Prophet.
- **Verse 23:** he is a voice preparing the Lord's way (Isaiah 40:3).
- **Verses 26–27:** he points to someone greater, already among them, whose sandal he is not worthy to untie.

Ask: "Which of John's answers shows his humility most clearly?"

Gospel connection: John points to Jesus. Say plainly that Jesus died for our sins and rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). We trust Him as Savior. We cannot save our friends; we can point them to the One who can.

3. What do they need to do?

Students who follow Jesus: name one friend privately, pray for that friend this week, and plan an honest way to start a conversation. Students still exploring: write one question about Jesus to talk through with a leader. Pray together. Offer help; do not require a public report.

4. Why do they need to do it?

Jesus is greater than John and deserves to be known and trusted (vv. 26–27). Helping a friend learn about Him matters. We cannot guarantee a friend's response, and we do not have to. Closing sentence: "You can help your friend learn about Jesus, and you can trust God with their response."

5. What can I do to help them remember?

Hold up an arrow and connect it to "We point people to Jesus." Ask: "Which of John's words show he is pointing away from himself?" Then: "What might this look like in one friendship this week?" Let students explain before everyone says the sentence together.

Time and preparation choices

Clock: 2 opening question · 2 read the passage · 7 explain with questions · 4 response and prayer · 3 discussion with the arrow · 2 recall and close.

Cut: long commentary quotations; extra background on each religious group. Adapt: the friendship question replaces the sermon's opening. If short on time: drop historical detail, never the passage or the response. Next time: open by asking what happened and what was hard.

Wednesday Worked Example: Curriculum Lesson

The same five questions, applied to a curriculum lesson with a discussion format. Example passage: Luke 10:25–37, the Good Samaritan.

Wednesday gives you more time and a curriculum that already has a passage, an aim, and questions. The Five Questions still work; you use them to make the curriculum yours rather than reading it to the room. The curriculum's aim becomes your "one thing." Its questions become the starting point for yours.

The one thing

Loving my neighbor means helping the person in front of me, even when it costs me.

1. Why do they need to know it?

"Who is the person at your school that everybody avoids?" Don't take names; let them picture someone. The lawyer in Luke 10 wanted a definition of "neighbor" small enough to manage. Jesus gave him a story instead.

2. What do they need to know?

Read Luke 10:25–37 aloud, with a student reading the lawyer's lines. Define "Samaritan": a people the Jews despised, so the hero of the story is the last person the crowd expected. Three movements: the question (vv. 25–29), the story (vv. 30–35), the question turned around (vv. 36–37). The lawyer asked "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus asked "Who was a neighbor?"

3. What do they need to do?

Discussion, not a lecture: "Who walked past the man, and why do you think they did?" Wait. "What did it cost the Samaritan?" Then the response: one person this week you would normally walk past, and one specific way to stop. For a student exploring faith: "What do you think Jesus is saying about God in this story?"

4. Why do they need to do it?

From the passage: Jesus is the one who did not walk past us. Romans 5:8, "while we were still sinners, Christ died for us." We stop for people because He stopped for us. Closing sentence: "Jesus crossed the road for you. Who will you cross it for?"

5. What can I do to help them remember?

The handle: "Cross the road." Two questions: "What did the Samaritan do that the priest and Levite would not?" and "Who is one person you could cross the road for this week?" Next Wednesday, open by asking who crossed the road.

Running the discussion

- Ask one question at a time and wait. Follow up: "Why do you think that?" "Does anyone see it differently?"
- When an answer misses, go back to the verse together. When you don't know, say so and follow up.
- Let a student say the one thing before you do. End by saying it together.

Questions Teachers Ask

What if I don't agree with something in the notes?

Read the passage again and check the notes against it. If you still disagree, ask a pastor before Sunday; don't teach around it or teach against it in the room. Most of the time it is a wording question, and a five-minute conversation settles it.

What if a student asks something I can't answer?

Say so. "That's a good question. I want to check before I answer." Write it down, ask a pastor, and bring the answer back next week. Students trust a teacher who follows up more than one who bluffs.

What if I run out of time?

Cut background and illustrations, never the passage, the main point, the response, or the gospel. The fix is before Sunday: rehearse out loud and plan the clock.

What if nobody talks on Wednesday?

Wait longer than feels comfortable. Point to a verse. Let them talk to a partner first. Ask a factual question before an open one. Silence usually means they are thinking or they are not sure it is safe to be wrong; make it safe.

Do I have to teach everything in the notes?

No. The notes support a forty-minute sermon. You are teaching one thing faithfully, with the explanation your students need to understand it.

What about a student who doesn't believe yet?

Don't ask them to pretend. Invite their questions and give them a response that fits: "Write one question you have about Jesus and bring it to me." Point them to Jesus and let the Spirit do the work only He can do.

How do I know if it worked?

Ask a student to say the one thing in their own words. Ask about the response the next week. Ask another leader to sit in. Visible results are not the test of faithfulness, but understanding and response are things you can look for.

Where do I get the notes and the videos?

The sermon notes are available to download each week. The ten Teaching Well videos are at thesummit.life.

Should I send anything home?

One paragraph after the lesson works: the passage, the one sentence, what you asked students to do, and two questions a parent can ask. Example: "This week we looked at John 1:19–28. The one thing: We point people to Jesus. We asked each student to pray for one friend. Ask: What did John say that shows he was pointing away from himself? Who is one person you could point to Jesus?"

Glossary

Words that come up in the notes and videos, defined the way you would define them for a student.

Word	What it means
Christ / Messiah	A title, not a last name. "Christ" (Greek) and "Messiah" (Hebrew) both mean "anointed one," the King God promised to send.
Commentary	A book where a scholar explains a passage verse by verse. The notes quote commentaries so adults can see the text was handled carefully.
Context	What comes before and after a verse. A verse is a sentence in a paragraph in a book; read around it.
Exegesis	Drawing the meaning out of a passage, rather than reading your own idea into it. John 1:18 uses a related word: Jesus "explains" God.
Expository	Teaching that explains what a passage says, in order, letting the text set the agenda. Summit preaches this way.
Gospel	The good news that Jesus died for our sins and rose again, and that everyone who trusts Him is saved (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). Never cut it.
Main idea / the one thing	The one sentence a student should be able to say on the way home. It must come from the passage.
Motivation / Information / Application	The three sections of Summit's sermon notes after the Scripture: why you need this, what you need to know, what you need to do.
Tabernacle	The tent where God lived among Israel in the wilderness. John 1:14 says the Word "pitched His tent" among us.
Pharisees, priests, Levites	The religious leaders in John 1. For students, "the religious leaders" is usually enough.

Observer Feedback Form

For another leader sitting in on a lesson. Specific and kind. Proverbs 27:6.

Teacher _____ Date _____ Passage _____
Group _____

The one thing, as I heard it (one sentence):

Could the students say it back? What did their answers show?

Was the passage read and explained clearly? Any word that needed defining?

Did students get a chance to respond? Was the response specific?

One thing that worked well:

One thing to make clearer next time:

Finished on time? ☐ Yes ☐ No Gospel stated clearly? ☐ Yes ☐ No Closing sentence landed? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Coaching One Another

Every teacher practices with a leader and teaches with an observer. This page is for both of you.

When	What	Page
Before the first lesson	Read the planner together. For the main idea, ask "Where do you see that in the passage?" Check that the response is something a student can do and that the gospel is stated, not assumed. Teach three minutes; the listener names the main idea back and one thing to make clearer. Fix it and try again.	2, 13, 14
The first lesson	An observer sits in and fills out the feedback form.	18
Afterward	Debrief: what did students say back, and what will you adjust? If you lead Wednesday discussion, work through the Wednesday example together.	15, 18

What to listen for in a planner

- A main idea that is a theme ("humility") rather than a sentence from the passage. Push for the sentence.
- A response that is an idea ("be a witness") rather than something a student can do before next week.
- A gospel connection that is assumed rather than stated.
- A plan with no minutes on it.
- Illustrations borrowed from the sermon that won't land with this age group.

Giving feedback

- Specific and kind. "The one thing was clear; the application came too late to land" beats "good job."
- One thing that worked, one thing to make clearer. Not a list.
- Ask before you tell: "What did you want them to walk out with? Did they?"
- Proverbs 27:6: faithful are the wounds of a friend. Don't be offended, and don't be vague.

Example Sermon Notes: John 1:19–28

"A Voice in the Wilderness" | The Gospel of John: Why Should I Believe? | Reproduced as the training example

SCRIPTURE

John 1:19–28

MOTIVATION (WHY YOU NEED THIS)

In the first verses of John 1 we discovered who Jesus was (eternal, God made manifest, Creator, life and light), how He was sent by the Father as a human (John 3:17), and what He brought: grace and truth (John 1:16). Today we turn to John the Baptist (not the writer of this gospel) and his testimony about Jesus Christ.

Why was it necessary to have someone give testimony about Jesus? Because you don't recognize a person you're not expecting. There had been 400 years of silence, no prophet or word from God, and people were treating religion as routine. Jesus walking into Galilee would have added one more face to the crowd. But it is God's pattern to send someone before He acts (Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, the prophets). John's testimony would cause people to look again: to stir up expectation, call them to repentance, and get their hearts ready, so that when Jesus came, people would recognize Him. God promised this testimony 700 years earlier (Isaiah 40:3). John was proof God was keeping His word, and that the King was right behind him.

INFORMATION (WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW)

John's testimony was received with questions from the Jewish religious leaders.

- **Who are you?** (v. 19) The Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem; they had been sent from the Pharisees (v. 24). Priests were responsible for the temple's sacrifices; if you wanted to get right with God, you went through them. John was offering a way to get right with God at a river, and they wanted to know by whose authority. Levites were the temple's staff and teachers; they came to evaluate John against the Scriptures. Pharisees were the most respected religious leaders of the day; they sent the priests and Levites because John was drawing the crowds that used to follow them. John was baptizing in Bethany across the Jordan, about 20 miles from Jerusalem (v. 28). John pulled the crowds out of the temple, and the temple leaders noticed.
- **John answers with who he was not** (vv. 20–21): "I am not the Christ" (the Messiah promised by God); "I am not Elijah" (expected to return in the last days); "I am not the Prophet" (prophesied by Moses).
- **What do you have to say about yourself?** (v. 22) John said he was sent to prepare the way for the Messiah: "I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said" (v. 23). John's real function was not to teach ethics but to point people to Jesus.
- **What right do you have to baptize?** (vv. 25–27) John said he was simply baptizing with water, a visible sign of repentance, and that there was One among them they did not know, whose sandal strap he was not worthy to untie. John continually deflected attention off himself so that Jesus might be proclaimed and believed in. John's role is the same as ours: to proclaim Jesus to those who do not yet know Him. We gather on Sundays and scatter into the world so that our friends, family, neighbors, co-workers, and the whole world may know and believe.

APPLICATION (WHAT YOU NEED TO DO)

John the Baptist's role is also your role: to point people to Jesus. John wasn't the Christ, and neither are you. It is not your job to save anyone. We point people to the One who saves. This week: think of one person in your life who doesn't know Jesus yet. Pray for them every day, and then take the bold step to share what Jesus has done in your life.

Training note: Luke 2:25–38 shows Simeon and Anna were waiting, so teach "most people were not expecting Him" (v. 26: the questioners do not recognize the One among them).

Example Sermon Notes: John 1:14–18

"The Word Became Flesh" | The Gospel of John: Why Should I Believe? | Reproduced as the training example

SCRIPTURE

John 1:14–18

MOTIVATION (WHY YOU NEED THIS)

Anyone watch Sesame Street growing up? Remember when Grover teaches kids near and far by running back and forth until he is completely exhausted. From a very young age we understand what it means for someone to be close to us and for someone to be far away. When someone is far away, it is complicated to really know them. When a person is near, the relationship becomes possible. Today we look at God, who seemed far away, coming to live among people. His eternal nature can make Him feel distant, so John tells us how Jesus came near.

INFORMATION (WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW)

What did Jesus do in coming near to us?

- **Jesus took on human flesh and dwelled among people** (v. 14). Jesus became human but did not stop being God (Philippians 2:6–7). He set aside heavenly glory, independent authority, divine prerogatives, eternal riches, and, on the cross, the favorable relationship with the Father. "Dwelt" means He pitched His tent: in the past God manifested His presence in the tabernacle and the temple; now God takes up residence among His people in the incarnate Word.
- **Jesus brought with Him grace and truth** (vv. 16–17). We have received grace upon grace: when one supply is exhausted, another is available. Grace is a gift we don't deserve and can't earn, and it keeps coming. The law, given through Moses, tells us what God expects but cannot fix us; grace gives us what we couldn't earn. The law is like a check-engine light: it tells you something is wrong but can't fix it. Only Jesus can fix what sin has broken, and His grace doesn't run out.
- **Jesus made God known to the world** (v. 18). Before Jesus, no one had seen the fullness of God. Moses asked to see God's glory and saw only His back (Exodus 33); in Jesus we see God's face. The Greek for "made him known" is where we get "exegesis": Jesus is God's explanation. When Jesus came, God could finally be seen, known, and believed. Most religions are about keeping an angry god happy; our God throws the door open and invites us in. How do we get in? Not by doing better. By grace.

APPLICATION (WHAT YOU NEED TO DO)

Come near to the God who came near to you. You can't earn your way to God, and you don't have to. Jesus already crossed the distance. Whatever you've been trying to fix on your own, stop staring at the check-engine light and bring it to Jesus. A lot of us live like Grover, close one week and distant the next, trying to close the gap on our own. But Jesus closed it for us. He came near, He brought grace that doesn't run out, and He stayed. You don't have to run to God. In Jesus, God ran to you.