It’s your turn to teach! Spend this week reading, pondering and praying about your assigned topic and be prepared to teach it to others next Sunday. Each member of the youth class will have a chance to teach. As part of your presentation, explain how the principle assigned encourages learners to be actively involved in their own learning. Try your best to apply the principle as you teach.


Part 1

**Suggestions for Conducting Discussions**

**Use Questions**

Questions can encourage those present to participate in discussions. They can help learners understand a principle, think about it more deeply, and relate it to their lives. They can lead learners to turn to the scriptures for answers.

Most lesson manuals provide questions for getting discussions started and keeping them going. You may use these questions and prepare your own. Ask questions that encourage thoughtful comments and help individuals truly ponder the gospel. (For additional help, see “Teaching with Questions,” pages 68–70.)

My thoughts and teaching ideas:
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Part 2

Select Teaching Methods That Relate the Discussions to the Lessons

After you have planned questions, ask yourself, “What else can I do? What methods can I use to enrich the discussion?” You can use many different teaching methods to begin discussions and keep them going. For example, you could begin a lesson by relating a story, using an object lesson, or singing a hymn together and having those present look in the hymn for the answer to a question.

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Part 3

Be Sensitive to the Spirit’s Influence on Those Present

The Holy Ghost may prompt one or more of those you teach to contribute insights that others need to hear. Be open to promptings you receive to call on specific people. You may even feel impressed to ask a person who has not volunteered to express his or her views.

My thoughts and teaching ideas:

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Part 4

Find Ways for All to Participate

Those you teach will benefit from each other’s participation. However, you may find yourself asking for comments only from those who raise their hands. Occasionally people choose not to participate because they have no opinion about the topic or prefer to give others the chance to speak. Or they may fear being wrong or think that they cannot express themselves as well as others. They may feel that they are not accepted by the group.

Be sensitive and prayerful as you consider each individual. You may decide to ask for a person’s opinion about a topic rather than ask a factual question that he or she may not be able to answer. For example, rather than asking, “What gifts of the Spirit does Paul list in 1 Corinthians?” you could ask, “Why do you think charity is the greatest of all the gifts of the Spirit?” You may ask someone to prepare a brief presentation for a lesson; you may even help him or her prepare it. You may want to first befriend some individuals, letting them know that you value what they have to say.

My thoughts and teaching ideas:
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Part 5

Maintain the Focus of the Lessons

Occasionally learners share ideas that do not relate to the lesson. If you feel that a comment detracts from a lesson, you can guide the discussion back to the main points of the lesson by saying something such as, “That is an interesting observation, but I believe we are straying into another area. Could we leave that discussion for another time and get back to the original question?” Or you could say, “I don’t think I am prepared to talk about that today. Perhaps we could discuss that idea another time.”

There may also be times when you do not know the answer to a question. If this happens, simply say that you do not know. You may want to say that you will try to find the answer. Or you may want to invite learners to find the answer, giving them time in another lesson to report on what they have learned.
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Part 6

Maintain Order

Sometimes several learners may be anxious to comment on an idea. Encourage them to raise their hands when they wish to comment and to wait until you can call on them. Point out how much they can learn from one another, and invite them to listen respectfully to each other’s ideas.

Occasionally an individual may disrupt a lesson by arguing with you and others, speaking irreverently, or raising controversial issues. Such a person introduces a spirit of contention, which makes it difficult to teach and can weaken the faith of some. For suggestions on how to work with such individuals, see “Helping Those Who Become Disruptive,” pages 84–87
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Part 7

**Do Not Talk Too Much**

Teachers who lecture most of the time or answer every question themselves tend to discourage learners from participating. You should be careful not to talk more than necessary or to express your opinion too often. These actions can cause learners to lose interest. Think of yourself as a guide on a journey of learning who inserts appropriate comments to keep those you teach on the correct path.

Your main concern should be helping others learn the gospel, not making an impressive presentation. This includes providing opportunities for learners to teach one another. When an individual asks a question, consider inviting others to answer it instead of answering it yourself. For example, you could say, “That’s an interesting question. What do the rest of you think?” or “Can anyone help with this question?”

My thoughts and teaching ideas:
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Part 8

Do Not End Discussions Too Soon

Be careful not to end good discussions too soon in an attempt to present all the material you have prepared. Although it is important to cover the material, it is more important to help learners feel the influence of the Spirit, resolve their questions, increase their understanding of the gospel, and deepen their commitment to keep the commandments.

My thoughts and teaching ideas:

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Part 9

Listen

Make every effort to listen sincerely to learners’ comments. Your example will encourage them to listen carefully to one another. If you do not understand someone’s comment, ask a question. You might say, “I’m not sure I understand. Could you explain that again?” or “Could you give me an example of what you mean?” (For additional help, see “Listening,” pages 66–67.)
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Part 10

Acknowledge All Contributions

You can help those you teach feel more confident about their ability to participate in a discussion if you respond positively to every sincere comment. For example, you might say, “Thank you for your answer. That was very thoughtful” or “What a good idea! I had never thought of that before” or “That is a good example” or “I appreciate all that you have said today.”

Never ridicule or criticize any question or comment, but show courtesy and love as you do your best to respond. When people feel that their comments are valued, they will share their experiences, feelings, and testimonies more freely (see “Teaching Others to Contribute to a Learning Atmosphere,” pages 77–78; “How Teachers Can Contribute to a Learning Atmosphere,” pages 79–81).
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Part 11

Rescue Learners Who Give Incorrect Answers
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Occasionally someone might say something that is incorrect. You can rescue the learner with a response like “I had not thought of it that way before.” Or you might say, “Perhaps you are thinking of something else” or “I’m glad you brought that up.” In some cases, you might take responsibility for an incorrect answer. For example, you could say, “I didn’t make myself very clear, did I? I’m sorry.”

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Part 12

Bringing Discussions to a Close

It is important to end discussions at the right time. Much of the spirit of an uplifting discussion is lost when it lasts too long. The following suggestions may help you:

• Manage the time. Know when the lesson should end. Give yourself enough time to summarize what has been said and to bear your testimony.

• Give learners a time limit. You could say something like, “We have time for only two more comments.” Or you could say, “We’ll listen to one more comment, and then I’ll conclude with a final thought.”

In addition to bringing discussions to a close at the right time, it is important to end discussions in the right way. When you end a discussion, thank the learners for participating. Then summarize the main points you have covered during the discussion or invite someone else to do so. Emphasize the gospel principles discussed. Review any new insights gained from the discussion, and encourage those you teach to use their deepened understanding in applying the principles to their lives. As prompted by the Spirit, bear your testimony or invite someone else to do so.