

The Power of Questions

The Questioning Strategy

- “Using the questioning strategies of A Living Curriculum means not being concerned about getting the “right” answer. We, as teachers, need to recognize that life is process. Our role is to acknowledge a child’s answers as they are learning and growing in life’s process. We want to continue to ask the questions as long as possible to allow each child time to grapple with their own questions and to seek their own answers. For God is within and we want to learn to go within for answers that are for our highest and best good.” ~ Unity Worldwide Ministries, *Youth and Family Ministry Guide*

1. “What is Happening in the Story?”

By asking these questions we have a chance to hear what facts the listener actually picked up and which ones they missed. You want to focus the children on what actually happened in the story not their interpretation of it for now. We are looking for the facts.

Examples of possible questions:

- What happened first? Then what happened?
- What do we know about (a character, the location...)?
- Describe what was going on between...
- What else happened?

2. “How are the Characters Feeling About What They are Experiencing?”

We begin to move out of the story bubble and begin to invite the children to think about what the characters might be feeling because of the experiences they are having.

Examples of possible questions:

- How do you think the disciples were feeling when the storm began to rock the boat?
- What do you think they wanted to do when they saw Jesus sleeping?

3. “How is This Happening in the World?”

This is a “bridging question:” It shifts the focus from the story to the present time. By doing so, the child begins to see how the story connects to life. The question is also impersonal. It is about someone else. Keep in mind that the younger the child the smaller their world.

Examples of possible questions:

- How do you see this happening in your friend’s life / your school / your community?
- How is this happening in the world right now?

4. “How is This Story Happening in Your Life”

As the story comes alive within each child, the facilitator will begin to sense children straining to talk about it in terms of their lives. This is when it is time to step out of the story world bubble and into the world. We use the following types of questions: **“How is this story an event in your life?”** With this question, a person begins to go beyond the story and considers applying a concept to what is happening to them. This step guides one to see themselves as part of the story. **Examples of possible questions:**

- Tell me about a time you experienced a storm?
- How are you like...?
- Who do you identify with in the story? Why?
- When has something like this happened to you? Describe it.

5. “How Will You Use This Experience in Your Life?”

The main purpose of our teachings is to be able to apply them to our lives.

Examples of possible questions:

- What can you do this week that will help you understand how to...?
- Tell me a story about how this idea can change your community in just a small way.

6. “How Would You Like It to Be?”

This final question involves encouraging the children and teens to go beyond how something shows up in the world or in their life. It asks them to consider ways in which something could be different. It helps them explore alternatives and possibilities. Then they can see that they have a choice – allow something to continue and do something about it.

Examples of possible questions:

- What would you have done in this situation?
- What power do you have to change things?
- How would you change the ending of this story? How else could this have turned out?