

## WORD ART: Using Pictures in Gospel Teaching Linda McIntire 2009

**Seminar description:** Jesus, the master teacher, used both visual and word pictures to convey and clarify truth. Young children, being concrete learners can more easily grasp deep spiritual truth when presented with pictures, both verbal and visual. We will discuss some Biblical word pictures and learn the basic principles for crafting and using various types of pictures in our teaching.

### STYLES OF LEARNING

- Auditory learners learn best by listening, explaining, lecturing ( )
- Kinesthetic learners learn best when they can physically interact with what is being taught, hands on learners. ( )
- Visual learners learn best when what is taught is accompanied by pictures or objects. ( )

In our classrooms our teaching will be most effective if we try to incorporate elements that will reach each type of learner. As often as possible we should:

- use clear, age appropriate words, - Don't use words like omnipresent with kindergartners- say "God is everywhere" or eternal life "live forever".
- illustrate with colorful pictures, videos, or live specimens and then
- provide activities where the children can physically interact with the material.

### TEACHING WITH VISUAL PICTURES (Seeing)

We can't ignore the fact that this generation lives in a multimedia culture. If we want the message we bring to affect the lives of our hearers we will have to give more thought to how we visually present the lesson.

"A Picture is worth a thousand words"

The Bible is filled with examples of the use of familiar objects in teaching.

### TEACHING WITH VERBAL PICTURES (Hearing)

When objects are unavailable we can create pictures in our hearer's minds through words alone. Using words in this way help students think and formulate their own ideas.

These literary forms are commonly known as similes, proverbs, metaphors, allegories and parables.

**Simile**= mean "like or resembling" It compares one thing with another.

Matthew 13:31 "The kingdom of heaven is like a *mustard seed planted in a field. It is the smallest of all seeds, but it becomes the largest of garden plants and grows into a tree where birds can come and find shelter in its branches.*"

**Proverb**= is a short, wise saying illustrating a truth

Proverbs 1:25 "*An anxious heart weighs a man down, but a kind word cheers him up.*"

**Metaphor**= means "to carry over" One object is equated with another. A metaphor uses words to describe an object that possess properties that are familiar to us and then transfers those properties to a more lofty object in order to help us gain a fuller appreciation of the loftier object.

Psalms 84:11 "*The Lord God is a sun and a shield.*" In this metaphor the sun is the source of light, heat and power. The life of the earth depends on the sun. Therefore the Lord as a Sun, is the Source of all life.

**Allegory**= is a story in which objects, persons and actions are equated with meanings that lie outside of the story. The underlying meaning has moral, social, religious, or political significance. The characters are often personifications of abstract ideas, as charity, greed, or envy. Simply put, an allegory is a story with two meanings, a literal one and a symbolic one. John 15: "*I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.*"

**Parable**= is a story, either true or possessing the appearances of being true, which uses images from the visible world to illustrate a moral or spiritual lesson. (Prodigal Son, Lost Coin).

Two good examples in the Bible:

Jotham- Judges 9:7-20 and Nathan- 2 Samuel 12:1-13

### **Why do verbal word pictures work so well?**

- They capture and direct our attention.,
- They tap into our emotions, intellect and will.
- They help cement thoughts in our memory. We remember concepts and conversations much longer when a word picture is used.

### **The role of the Holy Spirit**

I can not stress enough the role of the Holy Spirit in changing the lives of students through word pictures. The Holy Spirit who knows

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the heart of each child knows what it will take to bring that child into a saving knowledge of Jesus, into an attitude of commitment, repentance, forgiveness, or whatever else He is calling them to do.

### **Crafting Word Pictures**

2 prerequisites necessary before trying to compose a word picture:

- i. Know your audience.
  - Spend time getting to know your students, both during and outside of class.
  - Find out their interests, hobbies, difficulties, home life, what they like to do in their spare time, what books they like to read, what movies they watch, what motivates them, where they are spiritually, etc.
  - Getting to really know your students will give you clues to which subjects will be relevant to them.
- ii. Avail yourself of interesting material.
  - Study the word pictures in the Bible.
  - Read interesting articles, watch nature programs, visit local museums, take bus tours, listen to travel logs, develop hobbies, try to stay current on the advances in technology.
  - All of these experiences will be the seeds for an effective word picture. The world is a treasure chest full of exciting "word picture material."

**Nature-** animals, weather, mountains, water, sun, sky, air

**Everyday Objects-** bicycles, meatloaf, toothbrush, paint brush, pencil

**Imaginary Stories**

Steps to crafting a word picture

- i. Recognize your need of the Holy Spirit's guidance. Pray that He will fill your mind with His thoughts.
- ii. Decide the purpose of the word picture.
  - Is it to bring conviction, reveal feelings, clarify thoughts, encourage, or illustrate a Biblical truth?
- iii. Identify and meditate on the aspect, feeling, attribute of God or deep truth that you want to illustrate.
- iv. Search for examples, situations, or experiences that have something in common with what you are trying to explain. You may have to write out a list of possible topics you could use.
- v. Mentally begin to formulate a word picture, testing it to see if it adequately clarifies, illustrates or expresses your feelings.
- vi. Write out your word picture, if you can. Ask yourself:
  - Is your story going to be told in the first or third person?
  - How will you introduce it?
  - From your list of topics decided which you will use.
  - After you've written it read it over and make any necessary changes.
- vii. If possible read your story to someone else to see if they understand the point you are trying to make. (Remember since the story is not specifically for them, it may not have the same impact you anticipate from the person(s) it was written for.)
- viii. Rehearse your story. This will help make the story flow more naturally and help with clarity.

### **Write a Word Picture**

Using: 2 Corinthians 4:17 "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all." and/or any other verses you think appropriate.

Try to answer the question: Why does God let us suffer?



**To organize yourself do you:**

- Write notes in a planner of some type       Remember the appointment time       Put sticky notes up to remind you

**During your Bible devotional time do you:**

- Read your Bible and pray       Listen to gospel or praise music and pray       Take a walk and pray

**To volunteer at church do you:**

- Help organize events       Join committees and discuss plans       Decorate, repair, or clean up

**To remember Scripture do you:**

- Write the verse on cards and read it over       Repeat the Scripture until you know it       Develop a fun way to remember the verse

**In school were you:**

- The teacher's pet       Always asking or answering questions       First to volunteer to hand out papers

**For accountability do you:**

- Keep a journal or diary       Share with a friend your progress       Attend discipleship groups

**During praise and worship do you:**

- Concentrate on the words       Concentrate on the music       Dance or move to the beat or rhythm

**Are your favorite words:**

- "I know..."       "I hear..."       "I can..."

**TOTALS:**

- Seeing       Hearing       Doing