

How can we adapt teaching to the needs of adults?

Adults

Adults are no longer growing like children, so we may not think of them as developing. However...

- Adults can continue to learn throughout their entire lives. It is important to provide continuing education for adults as well as for children and youth.
- Experience, scholastic level attained, and interests of adults vary widely according to education, work, where they live and where they have previously lived and traveled, their position in the family, etc. It is vital that the teacher of adults get to know the level and interests of those he teaches and that he adapt his choice of topics and teaching methods accordingly.
- Great changes take place in the lives of every person. Often these changes follow the development of their family.
 1. Marriage—they need to be thinking a lot about the interest and desires of their mates.
 2. Birth of children—the mother is more restricted and has more work, while at the same time financial needs increase.
 3. Children enter school—the mother begins to have a little more free time, but financial needs still increase with the schooling needs of the children.
 4. Children become teens—problems of communication, rebellion, confusion, sex. Separation from children who are living away from home in high school.
 5. Marriage of children—problems involving the bride price. They have children of their own, which adds a new grandparent relationship to the lives of the original couple.
 6. All the children leave home—parents are alone in the home. Sometimes the children live far away and parents do not hear from them often.
 7. Changes of menopause—female hormone levels drop quickly, causing physical, mental and emotional problems.
 8. Retirement—End of work. Increasing dependence on others for support.
 9. Old Age—physical weakness, forgetfulness, dependence on others, possible sadness or depression and longing for death.

The teacher must think about where on this scale the adults of his class are. What are the interests and concerns that dominate their lives. What teaching can help them at the stage where they are?

Adults can listen to teaching for 30 minutes if it is interesting and important to them. But it is still preferable to ask them questions and help them discover truth for themselves in the Scripture if they know how to read. If not, the teacher can still ask a question, then read a very short verse or part of one—several times if necessary—until they are able to pull the desired truth from the Scripture themselves.

If a teacher is asking adults questions, it is very important that he avoid embarrassing them if they do not know the answer or do not respond as he desires. The teacher should not get angry,

but simply say, “Listen to the verse again. Listen carefully. What does it say?” Then read the verse again, slowly and with emphasis and expression.

Some adults will not be able to memorize long Bible verses like children and youth can. The teacher should choose verses that they are capable of learning according to their understanding, reading level, education, and memory ability.