

DEBATE

ONLY LET THE INFORMED STUDENTS TALK

I suggest you use an Agree/Disagree [see my Agree-Disagree blog] poll in a previous session to find out what topic or issues your class is divided on.

If the group is divided 50% -50% a debate is in order.

1. Strengths
Allows open forum to confront honest differences among class members
Reinforces the precept that we can agree to disagree on minor issues
2. Weaknesses
May tread on denominational areas which have been resolved by the local church and tend to create unnecessary tension.
If disagreement is allowed to cause a wound to fester it would be in violation of a biblical mandate. Presenters might come unprepared scripturally.
A disagreement with one's theological position is OFTEN viewed as an attack on him personally, or an attack on his mentors and teachers. *Feathers get ruffled.*
3. Tips
People should know the week before class that there will be a serious but friendly debate on such-and-such and issue.
Rules of taking turns must be explained clearly and observed by all parties.
The moderator's quiet voice is LAW.
This does not take place on the field of eloquence or logic. It will be a discussion of "What does the Bible say [and mean]?"
Each side will leave with a better understanding of what the "other side" believes is so important.
Format:
 presentation of Affirmative Position [without interruption]
 rebuttal by Negative
 presentation by Negative Position
 rebuttal by Affirmative
 conclude with friendly discussion between two sides

We expect disagreement. That is why we are approaching this particular subject with this method. Godly men & women have disagreed on this topic for 1,000 years. Your purpose is to present the different viewpoints nicely.

Fisticuffs are permitted in the hallway afterwards. ☺
4. Example of guidelines: Write the parameters on the board or provide a handout. State explicitly what is not included and explain ground rules. Only those who have read the "collateral reading" are permitted to speak. Others may submit questions in writing to the moderator. Politeness must reign. Support your opinion with clear Scripture.

TOPICS

Stated in the form of an "affirmation."

It is better for Christian kids to attend a Christian college than a secular school.

Baptism in the 1st century Church was always by immersion [yes, even in the catacombs].

All NT churches had a plurality of elders and so should present-day churches.

Women were not ordained in the Bible. They should not be ordained today.

Although divorce was allowed under the OT Law, remarriage is only allowed in the NT in the case of the death of the mate.

The Rapture of the Church will occur suddenly, but there is scriptural evidence that it will occur in the middle of the Tribulation.