

PARTICIPATION

[the retention factor]

*The LECTURE is mostly “just flapping the gums.”
Learning may not take place.*

*Effective teachers have pulled off more of these attention grabbers.
I’ve stolen many of these for my classes. They work.*

Check the box as you try them.

1. Throw a dart into a map. Start the class with prayer that missionaries to go to that country. Only brave Christians pray that missionaries **from their own church** will go to that country.
2. Hotseat. One person sits on a stool and tries to defend a position as an unbelieving friend he knows. The rest of the class gently and lovingly tries to bring him to faith.
3. Write every major point on the board during class. *I also tell them, “If it is important enough for me to write it on the board, it is important enough to me to ask you next week in Sunday School.”*
4. We walked out into the church parking lot to look at my old half-ton pick-up truck with 10 huge black trash bags each full of 100 lbs of “rice” [*actually filled with balloons*] while we’re discussing the population of the world. If one grain of rice represented one person, each pound of rice would represent 25,000 people. A one hundred pound bag of rice [*= 2,500,000 grains of rice*] represents 2,500,000 people. A half ton = 25 million. 7 billion grains of rice would fill 280 pickup trucks, a row almost 1 mile long.
5. Bring international cookies which class is not allowed to eat until they have prayed that missionaries go to the country where those cookies are popular.
6. Stop class. Ask the adults to kneel while you pray about the issue which today’s Bible passage addresses and how it should affect your lives.
7. In a class of 150 Bible study members, I’ve asked everyone in the room to express his one-minute opinion on the topic at hand. In a “Neighbor Nudge” they form pairs and each gives his opinion or solution verbally to just one other person.
8. Follow-up on Neighbor Nudge. I ask for the most significant observations. I ask 5 people to **tell what somebody else just told them** that was worth hearing by the whole class.
9. A concomitant to the Neighbor Nudge is to ask every student to speak every class period. One of 5 ways.
 - 1 speak to the whole class
 - 2 talk to just one neighbor
 - 3 talk just to God in prayer
 - 4 write a note to himself/herself to read later
 - 5 divide into triads or quad [*3s or 4s*] to discuss a topic
10. I’ve passed around international money, foreign translations of the Scripture, photos of Syrian refugees, sugar cane stalks when we’re praying for Cuba, and my first leather bound Bible. I even passed around a “smooth stone” which I picked up in the Valley of Elah not more than a mile from where David killed a giant.
11. Taped money to the classroom ceiling as a reward for the pair-of-students who wrote the longest list of sins in 2 minutes.
12. Wrapped a former football player’s arms at his sides in “little sins” that are only the thickness of sewing thread—40x around. Ask him to break it without drawing blood. He couldn’t.

13. Posited a problem to solve from Scripture and allowed students to come to the board at will to write their solutions at anytime during the class period. Six answers were eventually written on the board. Nobody got the answer right. Decided never to do it again because my sharpest students became completely distracted and missed my whole lecture, I think. *I'll tell you the question, if you write.*
14. I dressed up 14 class members in simple costumes to represent a half billion people each, to illustrate their accessibility to meet a Christian. Each held a sign.
15. Brought my homemade birdhouse to class to illustrate the effectiveness of 4 shop teachers' methods of teaching.
16. I demonstrated 3 wrestling moves *[even though I was wearing a suit and shiny shoes]* using a student to illustrate the importance of how much repetition it takes to attain excellence. I applied it to learning how to explain the Gospel through much practice. Another time I challenged one of the guys on a wrestling team to a contest to see who could touch the other guy's shoes. I won.
17. Used a class member as a "plant." No one caught on until the lesson was finally learned.
18. Take students on field trips: cemeteries, ethnic grocery stores, mosque, botanicas, unclean drinking water sources, one-on-one witnessing to immigrants. Sometimes it has been just to go outside to walk off the dimensions of Noah's Ark, to measure the size of Jericho or to measure Goliath's height which is just 6" shy of a basketball hoop, or show a mark on the side of the building which would be the height of 90 million dollar bills stacked against it.
- Yesterday my college students and I measured the length of the hallway. It was 90'. That was 30' shorter than the lethal range of an archer's arrow. I told them, "I betcha the soldiers who marched around Jericho's walls stayed at least that far away from the archers who watched them from the top of the wall."
19. I walked to the back of the room and spoke for several minutes to emphasize a certain biblical truth.
20. A prof planted a small lighted candle under the small podium prior to the beginning of class. As I spoke of Jesus' use of "the light of the world" on cue someone turned out all the lights leaving us in pitch dark. I continued speaking and as their eyes became accustomed, I could hear their murmuring as they perceived the source of light.
21. A teacher used matches *[some paper, some wooden]* as object lessons in 6 different chapel messages to introduce and illustrate a different truth.
22. In presenting the importance of building a strong foundation and structure, I built an 8" "tower" out of 5 grams of balsa wood *[about the same weight as 2 nickels]* which was able to support 125 lbs. of iron before collapsing. It kinda looked like an 8" derrick when I finished building it. And it looked like a box of broken matchsticks when it finally collapsed.
- Objective: to demonstrate the necessity of time, materials, and planning.
23. YouTube.
24. College students in Creative Bible Teaching class must prepare their teaching lesson with applications which specifically address each student in the class.
25. I took interested members of my adult class to visit a Buddhist Temple to show them how easy it is to open a conversation about spiritual things with those of another faith and even another language. One of my friends later went back, sat through an extensive ritual ceremony and had a delightful conversation afterwards with the priest.

26. A friend yelled like a Comanche as he shouted David's cry, "**The Battle is the Lord's!**"
27. A "stuffy old professor" stood on top of his desk while teaching a certain chapter in Deuteronomy.
28. As I knelt in the middle of the classroom and taught the lesson of Hezekiah's prostrating himself before JHVH at the Temple, I saw one of my students weep. Hezekiah had spread Rabshakeh's letter before the Lord and pleaded, "Look! Listen! Your holy name is being reproached!"
The student told me later, through tears, that he had already dedicated his life to serve the Lord, but today he was dedicating his life to get to know the Lord intimately the way Hezekiah must have known Him.
29. Many have tried to tell a Bible story using different "voices" for each character in the chapter. Sometimes whispering, sometimes shouting.
30. I asked willing class members to prepare a 2 or 3 minute testimony ahead of time pertaining to how they came to faith in Christ.
31. One of my adult class Sunday School teachers divided our class into triads of 3 chairs before we showed up. Each group was given a paragraph to discuss and find three "points" of how we might be able to apply the lesson to our lives next week.
32. Before class started, Jeremy told our Sunday school teacher, John, about a discussion he and his daughter had had the previous week. During class John called on Jeremy to share with the whole class about the insightful question his daughter had just asked. We prayed for the daughter afterwards.
33. Our teacher asked us to memorize Juan 3.12 in Spanish.
34. My adult Sunday School teacher took up an offering for John, the "class mechanic," who had fixed many of our cars over the years. The mechanic's car was using a quart of oil every 15 miles. After we collected a chunk of change and gave it to him. Then one of our class members, Charlie, said he would donate a car to John. Prayer, of course.
35. After class had begun, Joan sneaked into class crying. The teacher stopped speaking. Friends gathered around her, hugged her, prayed for her. Some of us cried.
After a long pause the teacher resumed.
36. Tom often shows video clips from a life of Christ video dramatization after he has finished teaching that portion of Scripture.
37. I know of a class that skypes missionaries periodically.
38. Sing Bible verses which have been put to music a Capella whenever they show up in the Scripture.
39. I've given Sunday School homework to circle the word "believe" [98x] in the book of John. . .and rewarded them with large Hershey chocolate bars.
40. Bring Samson's jawbone to class [*well mine was from a Canadian moose*].
41. Memorize a verse during class.
42. Gave 5 questions at the end of class with the promise we'd start next class with the same 5 Qs.
43. Teacher demonstrated how he passes out a tract: to a waitress, to a cashier, to a trashman at Christmas, and to his doctor.
44. Held up two signs with "sins" written on them. Asked "Which sin is a greater temptation for you?" Went through several dozen pairs of sins.