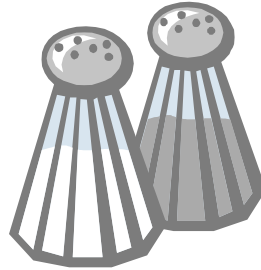


SPICE RACK®

E-Curriculum



by Mark DeVries

Note to the Teachers: The easiest thing to do (which actually becomes the most difficult before the end of the class!) is to use the same teaching method for the entire class period. What most of us are used to is simply lecturing or asking questions. And hey, if your kids are walking out each week saying, "Man, that connected with me. The hour just flew by!" then those two methods are fine. What this curriculum seeks to do is to give you active exercises that take the kids' attention off of you and their own discomfort enough that they CAN naturally answer the questions you want them to get at. Remember the rule: *1 minute of attention for each year of life lived*. That means that even in our older classes, we should be shooting for changing our teaching methods 3 times in the class period. The reason there are seven different exercises is that I'm guessing that 4 of them won't work for your group. If an exercise doesn't work, try the next one. But please try to engage the kids with something besides the standard lecture and Q&A. Thanks for all your work in loving God's kids! Also, to aid you in your preparation, any special supplies recommended for this lesson are outlined in a box. Contact colyer@ymarchitects.com with any questions!

“READING THE BACK OF THE BOOK”

Revelation

I. Gathering (Attendance, Announcements, First-Timers)

II. Engaging the Brain

A. Consulting the Experts

1. If you gave the assignment last week for students go to a few people they respected and ask for their perspective on specific questions about Revelation, invite the group members to tell about some of the opinions they heard.
2. Your Own Expert

- a. Before class begins, collect the pending answers from the sheets around the room.
 - b. Invite your pastor or some other “expert” to come to class today. Before he or she arrives, give him or her the list of pending questions.
 - c. Explain to the group that you have invited your expert to class to help talk through some of the more puzzling questions that the group had about the book of Revelation.
 - d. Explain that later in the lesson that they will be able to ask him or her questions. Encourage them each to be ready with a question.
3. The 666 Collection
- a. Ask if anyone brought any items that have the number 666 on them.
 - b. Invite the group to “show and tell” their items.
 - c. See if anyone has any idea where the number 666 came from, and explain that the group will get the chance to take a look at that text in a few minutes.

B. The Dictionary Game

1. Explain how the game works.
 - a. You will find a word in the dictionary that you might assume that the group members have never heard of before.
 - b. You read the word, and the group has 2 minutes to write their best-guess definitions for this word.
 - c. You will collect the definitions, read them to the group, and the group will vote for which definition is really from the dictionary. You will include the correct definition in the pile.
 - d. One point is given to those who guess the correct definition, and a point is given to the author of a definition each time the group votes for that definition.
2. Invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
3. If you’ve got a group that gets engaged when you play games, you may want to play a practice round with a random funny word.
4. If you’ve got a group that likes to move quickly into the heart of the lesson, just play the dictionary game with one word: “eschatology.”

C. Video Perspective on the Future: *Say Anything* (PG-13)



1. Cue the movie *Say Anything* to the scene in which Diane's family asks Lloyd what he's going to do with his life (about 40 minutes into the video).
2. Play the clip until Lloyd says, "For now I'm just gonna hang out with your daughter."
3. Process Questions

*What do you think about Lloyd's approach to the future?
 How would Lloyd feel about studying the book of Revelation?
 If you were to guess what Jesus would say about the future of the people in this class, what you might imagine it would be?
 Which do you feel more secure about, what you'll be doing in 20 years or what you'll be doing for eternity? Why would you guess that is?
 How would your friends live differently if they knew that the time was near for the end of the world?*

D. Survey Results Response

1. If your group completed the survey last week, present the tabulated results today.
2. In case your having a memory lapse, last week's survey asked the group members 2 questions:

*"What do you think the church thinks about how the world will end?"
 "What do you think about the end of the world?"*

3. Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down
 - a. Before you read through the responses, explain that you want the group members to indicate whether they agree or disagree with each statement by giving a thumbs up or thumbs down sign.
 - b. Have the group practice the timing of thumbs up/thumbs down on these two random statements:
 - 1) I enjoy being able to breathe.**
 - 2) My favorite musician is Michael Jackson.**
 - c. Once they've got the idea, read through the survey responses one by one, giving time after each statement for the group to indicate their agreement or disagreement with their thumbs.

4. Process Questions

*How close are the churches beliefs and our group's beliefs about the end of the world?
 Were there any answers that you disagreed with strongly?
 In general, how easy is it for you to determine what it is that you believe about this kind of thing?*

*Revelation 1:3 says that those who read this book will be blessed? What do you think that means?
When John writes, "the time is near," what do you think he means?*

II. Igniting the Heart

A. The Expert Consultation

1. If you have brought in your expert, give him the chance to answer the pending questions.
2. But before he addresses those questions, invite the group to ask anything about this topic that they want to make sure gets answered today.
3. It would be wise to limit this time to 10 minutes. You can always extend it if the kids are abnormally attentive, but don't want to require your "expert" to have to carry the class, particularly if he seems to be losing the group.
4. When your expert is finished, thank him or her for coming and invite them to stay for the rest of the class if he or she would like.

B. Demystifying 666

1. Intro Process Questions

*What do you know about the number 666?
Where did you learn what you know about it?
How many of you have read what the Bible has to say about this number?*

2. Research Teams in Pairs (or in groups around the Bible)
 - a. Divide the group so that everyone is in a small group (groups of 2 to 4 would be ideal) with at least one Bible in each small group.
 - b. Give each group 3 minutes to read Revelation 13: 11-18 and come up with their theory of what it means. The only restriction is that they must base their conclusions on what the Bible actually says.
 - c. After dividing the group up, allow the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
3. Reporting Back
 - a. Allow each pair to report on their conclusions about what this 666 number actually means.
 - b. Explain to the group that during this reporting time, they are not allowed to disagree or argue with anyone else's conclusion. Let them know that they are, however, encouraged to ask this one question: "Is that really in the Bible?"
4. Process Questions

*Which seems the most reasonable explanation to you?
Why do you think there are so many mixed-up versions of what
these numbers are supposed to represent?*

5. Mini-Lecture--The Scholarly Backdrop

- a. Remind the group that there are a variety of interpretations of what 666 represents.
- b. Options
 - 1) **A symbol for evil--777 is the perfect number. 666 is the number for evil (one less than the perfect number).**
 - 2) **A number somehow connected to Domitian, an emperor who was likely in power when the book of Revelation was written, who brutally persecuted Christians.**
 - 3) **A number that will be connected to an evil person or a movement that is now not known, but will be known when the time comes.**

6. Process Questions

What do you see symbolized by the fact that the number for evil is just one less than the number for perfection or God? Why do you think the number for evil is not 000?

How easily do you think people are led astray about topics dealing with prophecy and the end of the world?

C. Spark Plug Sentences on Evil

1. Put each of the Spark Plug Sentences on a different slip of paper, and put those slips into a hat.
2. Explain that since much of the book of Revelation has to do with dealing with the power of evil, that you have put together a few Spark Plug Sentences to get the group talking about a Christian response to evil (These sentences all came from Scott Peck's book, The People of the Lie).
3. Explain how the process will work.
 - a. A volunteer from the group draw out a slip of paper, read it to the group and then respond to it with the first thing that comes to his or her mind.
 - b. Once the first person has spoken, the rest of the group can respond to the sentence he or she read, what he or she said about it, or what another person in the group has said about it.
 - c. This process gets repeated until all the Spark Plug Sentences have been read or until we want to move on to the next part of the session today.

4. Invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
5. Spark Plug Sentences
 - a. **There is no neutral ground in the universe: every square inch, every split second is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan. --C.S. Lewis**
 - b. **It is often the most spiritually healthy and advanced among us who are called on to suffer in ways more agonizing than anything experienced by the more ordinary...Conversely, it is the unwillingness to suffer emotional pain that usually lies at the very root of emotional illness. --Scott Peck**
 - c. **Even civilians will commit evil with remarkable ease... "The clearest example is Milgram's obedience experiments. Faced with an imposing, close-at-hand commander, 65% of adult subjects fully obeyed instructions. On command, they would deliver what appeared to be traumatizing electric shocks to a screaming innocent victim in an adjacent room." --David Myers**
 - d. **By thinking primarily of evil we tend, however excellent our intentions, to create occasions for evil to manifest itself....No man can concentrate his attention upon evil, or even upon the idea of evil, and remain unaffected. --Aldous Huxley**
 - e. **The tasteless glitter of Las Vegas is a pretense designed to hide all the terrible dreariness. --Scott Peck**
 - f. **Since the primary motive of the evil is disguise, on one of the best places evil people are most likely to be found is within the church. What better way to conceal one's evil from oneself, as well as from others than to be a deacon or some other highly visible form of Christian? --Martin Buber's ideas in Scott Peck's words**

6. Process Questions

What connection can you make between the sparkplug sentences and the book of Revelation?

From the sparkplug sentences and discussion that we just had, what do you think is the most important principle in preparing whatever may come at the end of the world?

If this class were to go through the suffering described in Revelation, how prepared do you think we are right now?

D. Case Studies: You Are There

1. Introductory Process Questions

How many of you think our class is ready for the difficulties promised in Revelation?

What would it take to be ready?

What happens to a football team that is not prepared for struggle and pain?

Could the same be said of a youth group?

Many Christians see following Christ as a way to avoid pain. Does that fit your understanding?

2. Explain that since we can't create a perfect picture of what the end will actually be like, that we will look backward to a time in history that it might be most similar to...Nazi Germany.

3. **Case Study 1: Read the following case study to the class.**

Your family is hiding a Jewish family in the attic of your house. The authorities have said that anyone caught hiding Jews would be executed on site. Are you prepared to keep hiding them even though it might cost you your life?

4. **Case Study 2: Read the following case study to the group:**

You, a civilian, are given a machine gun and told to spray bullets into a crowd of Jewish women and children. You are warned that if you resist, you will be shot. How prepared are you to say no?

5. **Process Questions**

Which of the two case studies would be the hardest for you?

Do you think our class is prepared to make those kinds of decisions?

What about the leaders of our church? Is there one person you know in our church that you could bet \$1,000 on to make the right decision?

If our youth group was made up of 100 people who were prepared to make that kind of stand for what they believe, do you think we would make a different impact on our community? Any ideas about how we might be different?

III. Taking It Home

A. Wrap Up Process Questions

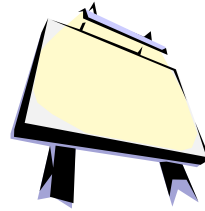
When the first people who read the book of Revelation finished reading it, do you think it had an impact on them? Do you think they did anything differently after reading it?

Do you think they expected life to always be happy and easy?

If we took this book seriously, do you think we would expect life to be happy and easy?

After these weeks of study, do you see the book of Revelation in a different light?

What is the one thing you will remember from these three sessions?



B. Billboards and Bumper Stickers

1. Give everyone a single sheet of paper and a crayon.
2. Give the group members 2 minutes to design and sketch a bumper sticker or a billboard that might sum up the message of Revelation as they understand it.
3. Invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
4. After time is up, have the group “check out” by telling about their billboard and bumper sticker designs.

C. Pray—that this group of students would be prepared for the future, whatever God has for them.