



## Teaching Curriculum for ABFs – September/October 09



I have an issue with telling my ABF teachers exactly what they will teach. Maybe you do and maybe you don't. My reasons are as follows: First, they usually won't teach with as much enthusiasm because they don't have input in the curriculum decision. Second, the curriculum I give them may not fit their particular teaching style. Third, they are more in tune with the needs of their class as they live life together with their group.

It is good to trust our teachers! But as overseers in the ministry, a good rule should be "trust, but verify." There can also be dangers with giving unlimited freedom to the teaching schedule. There is always the temptation to take a ride on the "teaching hobby horse." (i.e. a cultural issue, prophesy, a particular area of theology, the teacher's area of expertise, a perception of what people need to hear, the latest book that has sweep the Christian market, getting stuck in the nuances of an epistle, etc.)

That is why I love what Steve Lizzio's ABF Teaching Course Manual refers to as the "Balanced Curriculum Structure." This means a certain amount of freedom for the teachers, but all within a structure. For our teachers I have further outlined a way to balance out that curriculum structure and have put a percentage on how much time they should spend over the course of time in a particular area.

**50% Teaching through a biblical book.** Teaching through biblical books is a vital area to making disciples. A balance should be found between the Old and New Testaments in each class. I ask that each class teach one of the "Foundational Books" at least once every 2 years. Foundational books are defined as those that are central to a believer's understanding of Christianity and a Christian worldview. Foundational Books for our church are Genesis, John, Romans, Ephesians, and James. Some of these books are larger than others and we recommend they be taught in two to three parts for variety sake. One helpful resource we have used for lesson preparation has been sermon CDs by Bible teacher, Dr. James McDonald. Our teachers do their study and also listen to the appropriate CD by Pastor McDonald. I have found it helps the teachers relate the material from the Bible commentaries into a speaking format as well as gives them great ideas for applying the text. His website is [www.walkintheword.com](http://www.walkintheword.com). Just don't let them get lazy and play the CD for the class!

**25% Biblical Theology** – Especially today, people need to know why they believe what they believe and why it is important. We start with the "Foundations" curriculum from Purpose Driven ministries. There are 11 major Bible doctrines discussed. Within the material are 22 lessons and each one can be divided into two parts to make a total of 44 lessons. I usually try to help the teacher supplement this material with appropriate theology books related to the topic. (as the Foundations curriculum can be a little "generic" at times) In 3-5 years, a class can cover all the major doctrines of the Bible. We just use the "Foundations" Teacher's Guide and not the Participant's Guide, as it seems a bit redundant and is expensive.

**25% Relevant Topical Studies** – This area of study is to help people relate practical topics to a Christian understanding of their world. These topics can relate to the age and stage of the ABF or a particular cultural issue that people might be facing. I think there is a place for the topical studies as some subjects cannot be adequately covered by going through a biblical book study. Some of the possible topics could include Christian parenting, finances, hot topics, purity, Christian community, discovering your spiritual gifts, abortion, evangelism, marriage and many more.

In our teacher resource room, we have an entire bookshelf that is solely for our ABF teachers and leaders and serves as a resource library for them to check out materials. I try to have adequate Bible commentaries for them to use, relevant books and various teaching CDs as well as all the CD and DVD workshops offered by ABF Resources.

I've learned that persistent involvement in the lives of our teachers is necessary to helping them be coachable and receive input. Our efforts are well worth it. Helping our teachers teach the Bible can be one of the biggest impacts we can make for the kingdom, as overseers of adult ministries.

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