

25 IDEAS TO CONNECT WITH
HEARTS, MINDS, AND SOULS

DON'T JUST TEACH... REACH!



BY THOM & JOANI SCHULTZ
AND GROUP'S AMAZING TEAM OF CREATORS

Group
Real. Bold. Love.

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2019943859

ISBN: 978-1-4707-6009-0

Printed in the United States of America.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 28 27 26 25 24 23 22 21 20 19

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INTRODUCTION

A QUICK WORD ABOUT TEACHING...AND REACHING

You can tell when you're reaching others...

Whether you're teaching kids, teenagers, or adults, the signs are there. People are leaning in, soaking in every word. They're watching you closely. You can tell you're engaging something deep in them.

These are moments you're no longer teaching—you're *reaching*.

Reaching *hearts*...reaching *minds*...and reaching *souls*.

It doesn't get better than this. Not for you, and not for those you're leading.

You see, your job has never been to just teach. Your job—your calling—is to *reach* people with the good news that Jesus loves them and wants to be their friend.

And the 25 tips tucked in this little book will help you do that. They're the secret sauce of connecting more powerfully in your small group, Sunday school class, or youth group. They'll tell you what to do—and what to avoid doing.

Use them and you'll see boredom evaporate.
Conversations will take a turn toward the significant.
Faith and friendships will deepen as people grow closer
to one another—and God—in fresh, surprising ways.

All because now you're *reaching*...not just teaching.

Happy reaching!



Thom Joani

Thom & Joani

.....

**“Show me the right path, O Lord; point out the road
for me to follow. Lead me by your truth and teach me,
for you are the God who saves me. All day long I put
my hope in you.”**

(Psalm 25:4-5)



REACHING HEARTS

.....

“You must love the Lord your God
with all your heart, all your soul, and
all your mind.’ This is the first
and greatest commandment.”

.....

—*Jesus* (Matthew 22:37)

Denise is a preacher's kid. A *missionary* preacher's kid.

"But it wasn't until I was nearly 50 years old that I finally understood I was forgiven," she says. "It took that long before grace broke through to reach my heart."

And what unlocked that soul-soothing truth for Denise?

It wasn't one more sermon, that's for sure. Or reading one more Christian book. It happened when a woman leading a Bible study about grace set aside her teacher guide and engaged the group in conversation.

"She didn't settle for us being able to define what grace meant," remembers Denise. "She asked us each if we'd ever *experienced* grace. If we'd ever *felt* forgiven."

Denise had to admit: She hadn't.

That leader scuttled the rest of her lesson and gathered the rest of the group around Denise.

They accepted her, loved her, and helped her move past her guilt and shame and more fully into the joy of the Kingdom.

It took a leader who listened. A leader who didn't just *teach*...she *reached*.

And God moved though her to reach Denise's heart.



1 DO Focus on Relationships
DON'T Focus on Rules & Regulations

“I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.”

—*Jesus* (John 15:15, NIV)

.....

Jesus rattled his disciples.

They understood him calling them servants. But *friends*?

Yet here’s Jesus, sharing that the relationship he wants isn’t arm’s-length respect but intimacy. He’s after *friendship* with his followers—both then and now.

And being a friend is a very different deal from being a servant.

Servants serve because they don't have a choice. They show up out of obligation. And they live in fear of their masters.

Not so with friends. Friends show up because they want to be with you. They're eager to please you, not out of obligation but love. And they don't fear you; they trust you.

As you teach, how can you keep Jesus' desire to be friends front and center?

Here's how: Focus on relationships, not rules and regulations. Keep pointing back to Jesus' heart for us, his desire to have us be with him because we love him.

Build in time for relationships to flourish—with Jesus, with you, and with one another.

Always be moving toward friendship. That's where the good stuff is.

Because once the people you're teaching love Jesus, you won't have to convince them to live in a way that pleases Jesus. They'll naturally go straight there because that's how they'll please their friend.

DON'T JUST TEACH...REACH!

25 Ideas to Connect With Hearts, Minds, and Souls

Use these 25 time-tested tips to reach hearts, minds, and souls as you lead in small groups, Sunday school classes, and youth groups.



See boredom evaporate



Watch conversations take a turn
toward the significant



Deepen faith and friendships

Do more than teach. Reach!



Printed in the U.S.A.

Group
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ISBN 978-1-4707-6009-0

USD \$5.99



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RELIGION / Christian Ministry / General



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