

Effective communication with teenagers 2 (‘The law of language’)

This video training session is primarily for volunteer youth leaders to use at a time which is convenient to them, ideally as a group, though it could be used by individuals. The structure of the session allows for a flexible length depending on time and situation. The following notes are to guide the person leading the session, but do not assume any previous training experience.

If your time is limited, try to ensure you cover the parts **in bold**. However, feel completely free to alter the session, add your own questions and make it work best for your situation.

This session is one of two which considers issues of communicating with young people. On this occasion, it considers the language which we use when teaching teenagers. **You should allow at least 20 minutes for this session but if you have 30-40 minutes, it could be helpful.**

The speaker is world-renowned youth ministry trainer, Dr Duffy Robbins, Professor of Christian Ministries at Grove City College, Pennsylvania.

OPENING DISCUSSION (5-10 mins)

You might want to read out the information above and ask someone to pray. Then discuss one or both of the following questions:

- *Have you ever been in a foreign country and tried to communicate with someone, but just not able to make yourself understood? How did it feel?*
- **Imagine you came into church for the first time with no experience of Christianity. Make a list of some words and terms that we regularly use but would make no sense to a total newcomer.**

VIDEO

Duffy examines the need for young people to want to learn.

- Play video *Effective communication with teenagers 2 (‘The law of language’)* (6 mins)

DISCUSSION (10-20 mins)

- *What does the story of giving the dog medicine teach us?*
- **If your young people were able to speak honestly, what do you think they would say about the “method of delivery” of Bible teaching, which feels a bit like forcing a dog to take its medicine?**
- *Is there something about how your young people approach the Bible – or how we approach it with them – that might make it seem like a Japanese manual?*
- **The ‘Law of language’ says that the language that is used in teaching must be common to the teacher and the learner. Take some of the words you listed in the first discussion and try to explain them or replace them with words that any of your young people would clearly understand.**
- *Does the need to make sure we have a common language mean that we should not teach doctrine or complicated terms? How can we do this in a way which makes it not only understood but engaging?*

Take some time to pray together and, if appropriate, make a commitment to take 2-3 practical steps together to put this into action.