

“My Thoughts on Scripture Mastery and How To Use the CD Effectively”

- **WHY SCRIPTURE MASTERY?** I believe strongly in committing the scriptures to memory. The word of God as revealed in the scriptures can be used to guide us in our lives -- but only if we have them in our minds to begin with. I teach early morning seminary so let me share some of my thoughts:
- **MAKE IT FUN!** I think Scripture Mastery should be fun for the students. There are plenty of times to be serious and spiritual in class. The act of memorization can be drudgery so why not make it as fun as possible? I often use Scripture Mastery at the start of class as a wake-up technique. We usually play a game but I try to vary the activities. You can play Name that Tune from the CD, Scripture Charades, Regular Chase, Scripture Dodgeball (first person to get the verse has to throw a small nerf ball at the teacher and hit them), I Have a Friend (rather than do a traditional keyword chase, I have a student start making up a story of a situation when they could use this scripture as advice to their friend.) It might go something like “I have a friend who said they were really having trouble understanding the scriptures so I told them about this verse that said we should liken the scriptures unto ourselves”... the story continues until someone turns to and starts reading 1 Nephi 19:23. The winner has to make up the next story. The bottom line is you have to be creative and fun in the way you approach Scripture Mastery. Your students will respond much better that way. Be creative and come up with your own games!
- **OFFER REWARDS** Students do much better when they are given some credit for their accomplishments. I've found it helpful to have scripture chases in my class where the winner gets a 'point'. I keep a tally of the point totals and periodically let them cash them in for real prizes. I usually purchase these myself but you can get parents to donate gift cards, candy bars, movie passes, etc. Most of the time competition works in a class environment but if you find that some kids are turned off by it or consistently not as fast as others you can alter the competition by either making the winner sit out the next round or by working in teams. Many of my students last year said that their favorite part of seminary was the class room scripture mastery games for reward points!
- **HOW TO INTRODUCE AND USE THE CD** My favorite way to introduce Scripture Mastery to a seminary class is to use Helaman 3:29 (cross referenced with D&C 6:2). I usually bring some type of sword or long pole and mimic a Star Wars light saber battle to describe how the Word really will cut through the cunning snares and wiles of the devil. I focus them on the word 'quick' and how in order for them to be quick for you, you have to be able to access them quickly. Then I introduce music as a memorization tool. If you have a piano or a guitar play the first few notes of a simple song like Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. Just give them four or five notes and then stop and ask them how many people can recite the words to the song. Talk about how music is a series of notes and chord patterns that our brain can easily recognize and associate with lyrics. Music makes anything easier to memorize! Ask them their favorite song and if they know all the lyrics? Tell them the CD was made to encompass a wide variety of musical styles so it may not sound exactly like the music they listen to it but it should be close enough and fun enough to still serve its purpose. Then I have them open their scriptures to a SM verse and follow along as the song plays (choose a short one to start out). I usually let them spend the rest of the class marking the scripture mastery verses in their scriptures and listening to the CD. Remember the songs were designed to NOT sound too 'churchy' which some students might not relate to as well. They were created in hopes that the students would actually enjoy listening to them in their spare time. I usually create a list of the softer sounding songs from the CD to sometimes play as prelude at the start of class. You can use the Karaoke DVD to have either a singing competition or just as a way to pass off a SM verse. The CD & DVD both include 'Practice Tracks' for all the songs. These tracks are non-vocal tracks where just the music plays (sort of like a Karaoke version). These 'Practice Tracks' can be used to practice how well your students know the verse. If they have to sing it to pass it off, it still counts! You can purchase a class set for your students to have their own copy of the CD for as low as \$6 each. (Please do not violate the law by making illegal copies of the CD for your students.) If your students listen to the CD in their spare time, they will have the SM verses memorized in no time.
- **ENTER THE VIDEO CONTEST** Students love to see themselves on video and they love the chance to create something. What better way to have fun and apply the Scripture Mastery Verses to their lives than by creating a music video which teaches the principle from the Scripture Mastery verse. What you would do is download a few copies of past student-produced videos from the LDS Scripture Rock website (or view them in class on You-Tube) so the students get an idea of how the videos should work. Then give them some class time to break into groups assigning each one a SM verse and have them come up with a video proposal. Then have them present their video idea to the class. Then take a vote and select the best video idea. Bring a video camera and shoot the video in class. It's a good idea to have the CD playing during the video shoot so the timing of the video you shoot will line up with the audio track when you splice it together in a software program. Then let the kids watch the video and enjoy seeing their work. Hey, you might even win first prize in the contest which is a \$100 check to fund a class party!