

Tips for Teaching “How to Hear God’s Voice”

Applicable for the 8-hour seminar, 10-12 week course, or 2-hour presentation

Lamad Training - Real Life, Biblically-grounded, Revelation-based Learning

The purpose of these few pages is to help you be the most effective trainer you can be as you teach others how to hear God’s voice. Following are the lessons Mark Virkler has learned as he has taught this nearly 1000 times over a 25-year period of his life.

Pre-Seminar: When you are arranging to do a seminar with a group/church, send them the file entitled “Procedures for a Successful How to Hear God’s Voice Seminar.” You should first personalize this file replacing Mark’s name with your name, “CWG Ministries” with the name of your ministry, and Mark’s food preferences with your food preferences.

During the seminar or course: Utilize the “How to Hear God’s Voice PowerPoint.” Teach through it completely whether you are doing the seminar or the course. When teaching the full 10-12 week class, the participants will be reading the entire book *How to Hear God’s Voice*. Each week you will assign appropriate chapters for reading. However, during classtime, you can be taking them through the seminar guide using the PowerPoint presentation. Students will need to have both the seminar guide and the complete book. The book provides additional background allowing them to experience the teaching in greater depth. In addition, be sure to always leave room for questions and discussion.

During a brief presentation: When doing a one- or two-hour short presentation, do not use the seminar guide. Instead make copies of the first page of the seminar guide (i.e., the four keys of Habakkuk 2:1-2) for each seminar participant. Share your story of how you learned to hear God’s voice, focusing, of course, on the aspects which you sense your students will say, “Yes, that is my struggle also.”

Then cover Habakkuk 2:1-2 – the four keys. Next have them practice the four keys by writing a love letter to the Lord and allowing Him to respond. Close by having two or three *who got responses from the Lord* volunteer to read their love letters aloud to the entire group. This proves to all that the four keys work and it raises the faith of the entire group.

Rather than paint a detailed scene of them and Jesus together by the Sea of Galilee at this time, tell them to get together in a comfortable place with the Lord, fix their eyes on Him and write. **Note:** You have not yet laid a solid enough foundation to allow you to paint a scene (as this is a controversial issue for some). If you do paint a scene at this point, you will get some people reacting and resisting you. In a moment I will speak more on building bridges which offset these reactions. For now note that since the bridges have not yet been built, you do not prime

the pump by painting a detailed picture of them together with Jesus.

If you are making the presentation in only one or two hours, **do not skip** the journaling exercise of writing a love letter. Remember we must always **“practice truth in the classroom.”** We never have classes where we fail to **“do it”** (i.e., practice what we are teaching). So we always reserve 15-20 minutes to conduct a journaling session. That is, take three to five minutes to explain to them what they will be doing as they write their two-way love letter. (Tell them to picture themselves as a child, fix their eyes on Jesus and tell Him why they love Him so much. Then after one paragraph, they are to fix their eyes on Jesus, tune to spontaneity and write down His words of love back to them. They are to let it become a two-way love letter. They write one paragraph, and stop and let Him speak back.)

Then give them seven or eight minutes for journaling, followed by five minutes for testimonies. In every journaling time other than the first one (i.e., the writing of a love letter to Jesus), you will also be allotting another five minutes for small group sharing (two people per group). They will read their journaling to one another. Always make sure to instruct them that the groups are to be only two people, not three. They can move around to find someone to share with.

Since they will be a bit nervous, make a joke of it. Tell them to “look around for a friendly person to share with” and to let that person know that they are friendly also. They will all smile and ask others if they are friendly. It helps break the ice. Always give the instruction, “Simply read your journaling to the other person. Don’t paraphrase it, because your paraphrase is never as good as God’s original.” Also remind them, “If you are listening to someone share their journaling, and you sense in your heart it is God, *tell them*, thus building up their faith.”

For the 8-hour seminar and the 12-week course, each participant is to have a “How to Hear God’s Voice Seminar Guide,” available for \$3.95. (You receive these at a 40% discount and are encouraged to sell them for \$3.95.) A church hosting a seminar may include the \$3.95 seminar guide in the registration price, in which case the church will reimburse you \$3.95 for all they sell. These seminar guides and books may be ordered from www.cwgministries.org.

At the end of the seminar (or 12-week course) have participants complete the form entitled “Evaluation Worksheet for the ‘How to Hear God’s Voice’ Seminar / Course”. They may give these evaluation forms to you to read and then mail in to CWG Ministries, or they can mail them directly to us. They may also complete this evaluation form online at www.cwgministries.org/hthgveval.pdf

Make sure that during the seminar or course you include all the things they will be evaluating you on. Specifically these include:

- The meeting began with prayer inviting the Holy Spirit’s presence.
- The speaker created a loving, personal environment amongst the group.
- The speaker shared his own life story in ways which helped me understand better how to hear God’s voice.
- The speaker covered the seminar guide “How to Hear God’s Voice.”
- We recited together several times the four keys (stillness, vision, spontaneity, journaling) as well as the phrase, “Hearing God’s voice is as simple as quieting yourself down, fixing your eyes on Jesus, tuning to spontaneity and writing.”

- We were led into two-way journaling on two or more occasions during the 8-hour seminar or on most weeks during the 10-12 week course.
- We shared our journaling in small groups of two on at least two occasions during the 8-hour seminar, or on most weeks during the 10-12 week course.
- Volunteers shared their journaling with the entire group.
- We were strongly encouraged to follow up the seminar with the three-month course on How to Hear God's Voice, either with a group or as a college student with Christian Leadership University.

Start the seminar with your story of how you learned to hear God's voice. Your story is powerful and people will link into various parts of it, especially as it relates to their story. It warms everyone up, sets the tone as being personal and real to life, and you surely can put some humor in your story which helps everyone relax through laughter.

Remember that a *leader* is *one step* ahead of his followers while a *martyr* is *ten steps* ahead. So always sense the spirit of your group and know where they are. Meet them where they are *and take them one step forward*. They may not know everything you know when you are done with them, but if they have taken one step forward, you have provided a great service to them. If you offend them by going further or faster than they are willing or able to go, you have not served them well at all. Be sensitive to where they are, and only take them where they can handle going.

Build bridges because people are nervous! If you don't build a bridge and help them across it, they will stand on the other side and attack you and

the message, so meet them and help them cross the following bridges:

- *They are nervous about New Age visualization* so help them through their blocks with laughter and with understanding. Watch how Mark does this in the first session: *He has them think together with him, by asking them questions.* How many believe the New Age is a counterfeit group? Who are they counterfeiting? Do we have any counterfeit \$21 bills? Why not? Do we have any counterfeit \$1 bills? Why not? So when we see the counterfeit doing something (like visualization) do we run in the opposite direction, or do we say, "What is it that they are counterfeiting that is real and is valuable and is something God intended me to be doing?"

If satan is not counterfeiting anything you are doing, then you need to ask yourself, "Why not?" Is it because you are not doing anything worth imitating? These questions get people thinking and move them into a posture of "Yes, I need to explore the true and valid use of the eyes of my heart." *Now they are ready to learn and not to attack.*

- *They are nervous about things not specifically mentioned in the Bible* (e.g., right and left brain functions), so teach them proper biblical hermeneutics (rules for interpreting Scripture). Watch how Mark does this in the first session: *He has them think together with him, by asking them questions.* When we bring our journaling back to test it against Scripture, what question do we want to ask? (Answers from the group will generally include both of the following: "Is it in the Bible?" and "Does it line up

with the Bible?”). Help them see there is a *world of difference* between these two answers.

If it needs to actually be specifically stated in the Bible, then I can only believe things which are specifically stated in the Bible. However, if I believe that I can accept things which *line up with biblical principles*, then I can accept many things which are not specifically stated in the Bible, as long as they are *compatible* with biblical principles. Jesus said, “I have things to tell you but you are unable to bear them now.” That means that when our hearts are open and ready He will reveal more.

The whole Bible is true, but the Bible does not claim that all truth is in it. So I (we) are open to believing things which *are not specifically stated in the Bible*. Right and left brain hemisphere functions are not specifically stated in the Bible, but I believe they are compatible with biblical principles – for example, that God gives diverse gifts to different individuals.

Also point out that the person who says it must be in the Bible before he will accept it *probably does not really live that way*. He most likely sends his children to Sunday school, and public school, and believes in the trinity, and drives a car – none of which are mentioned in the Bible. So even he does not believe what he is trying to force upon me. If you don’t know where you stand, others will push you around. Therefore *know where you stand*, and do not let others move you.

At this point you have the students’ hearts opened up and ready and willing to learn things which are compatible with biblical principles, even though they

may not be specifically mentioned in the Bible. Now they will come alongside you and not against you.

- *They may be caught up in Biblicism* (worshiping the Bible). Help them see that the Bible commands us to live by the Spirit, rather than living in the Bible. Watch how Mark does this in the first session: *He has them think together with him, by asking them questions*. Does the Bible say to live in the Bible? No, the Bible says to live in the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, to worship in Spirit, to pray in the Spirit.

The Bible does say to meditate on the Word and to hide it in our hearts, but it never tells us to live out of it. It was the Pharisees who lived out of biblical law. Jesus lived by the Spirit instead, doing only what He heard and saw the Father doing (Jn. 5:19,20,30; 8:26,38). He is our pattern for how we are to live. At this point you should have your students’ hearts *open to pursuing things of the Spirit*. They are ready and hungry to learn about the ways of the Spirit.

- *They may believe it is wrong to learn anything from a non-Christian* and also the underlying corollary that God doesn’t speak to or give revelation to non-Christians. Thus, if a New Ager does it, we don’t. If Easterners do it, we don’t. (Of course, we all know Jesus was born in the West – in America, I believe!)

Back to questions: Where does the Bible say we poll non-Christians to determine what we do and don’t do? Where does the Bible say God doesn’t grant revelation and insight to non-Christians? He did to Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar through dreams. Moses’ father-in-law,

Jethro (a non-Jew), taught Moses how to delegate. The Bible is full of non-Christians receiving revelation from God. God is Lord of all, not just Lord of the righteous.

Therefore, I decide what I believe based on whether the Bible teaches it or allows for it, and not by taking a poll of how many cult groups do or don't do a certain thing. It really doesn't matter if every cult group or no cult groups do what I do. I do what I do because Scripture allows for it or specifically teaches it. Now you have peoples' hearts opened to the realization that we do not just discount and throw something away simply because a non-Christian was the one to come up with it.

Make sure you lead people in three journaling exercises during the course of the seminar and essentially every week in the 10-12 week course. Follow the same format of setting a New Testament scene that Mark Virkler uses. Practice this until you are comfortable with it. Do not be afraid to set a scene during the second and third journaling sessions.

You will note that Mark **does not** paint a scene for the first journaling session "the Love Letter with Jesus." He encourages each person to meet the Lord in a comfortable spot and then share their hearts with Him. **Again, we are building bridges.** Since painting a scene is controversial for many, we do not do it on the first evening.

Make sure to have a couple volunteers read their two-way love letters as this convinces all the rest that the four keys really do work and gets them excited to press on. This demonstration of spiritual reality and effectiveness gives you and the message more credibility, so when you get to the second and third journal entries you can paint a New Testament scene as you lead them

into an encounter with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Of course, by this time you will have also taught for another hour or two and demonstrated through biblical examples the principles you are practicing. This, too, will build greater trust between you and your audience/students.

After people finish journaling the second and third times (and beyond), make sure you have everyone share in small groups of two, and then ask for 4-5 volunteers to read their journaling with the entire group. State and enforce the rules which Mark uses. No preaching, no story telling, no paraphrasing of one's journaling, but instead simply read the question you asked the Lord and what He said back.

Sharing in groups of two is an important step of growth in faith which many need. Do not omit this. Sharing your "words from the Lord" with one other person is much easier than sharing them with an entire group. So this is a "baby step" in faith, and sharing with the entire group is a second step of faith. By requiring everyone to share in small groups of two, you are taking them by the hand and helping them cross the bridge of doubt and uncertainty to faith and belief. You are being a great coach and discipler.

However, you should also always give people an out. Tell them that if their journaling is too private, they do not need to share it, and they can just share something that spoke to them from the teaching of the previous session. But if they can share it, they should, as it is an important faith building step.

If you hear someone share their journaling and you sense in your heart that it came from the Lord, tell them that! Build up their faith. Ask volunteers to come to the front to share their journaling and give them applause from the group after they have shared. Affirm to them that what they have shared came from

the Lord (unless, of course, your heart tells you otherwise).

Do not correct a person's journaling publicly unless it is obviously in deep error. Then mention that you feel that it should be submitted to three mature spiritual believers before it is acted upon.

Emphasize the need of having three spiritual advisors. Follow Mark's pattern in the tapes. If they fail to establish three spiritual advisors, they will most likely fail in journaling and fall back to living out of biblical law. *So drive this point home.* Share a story from your own life showing how valuable it has been for you to have three spiritual advisors whom you can bounce things off from and be either affirmed or adjusted as the need may be.

Keep the training fun. Laugh; be real. Ask the Lord for the gift of humor and seek to develop it. Mark likes to use **exaggeration of common life issues** as his main strategy of nurturing humor. Exaggeration drives the point home while making it funny and giving everyone a chance to laugh at themselves.

For example: "This is going to be a depressing day in the ministry" when Elisha's servant looked outside and saw enemy chariots surrounding their house. Since Abram and Sarai had waited 11 years and God had not fulfilled His word and vision to them that they would have a child, "they decided to have a committee meeting to see if they could figure out a way to help God along." Question: "How does one internalize a new truth?" Answer: "By taking this pill we've developed which provides overnight transformation while you sleep." All of these exaggerations make the situation funny and get us laughing at the foolish things we often do, or at least think about doing.

Explore what strategies work best for you and use them. Humor is nurtured through smiling,

being light-hearted. That is, you turn the classroom instruction over to Jesus and keep your eyes fixed on the visions of what He wants to impart to the students during the class, and you speak from these pictures which you hold in the back of your mind. You foster an informal climate in the classroom, engage in story telling, nurture classroom interaction, capture students' humor as it occurs, stay spontaneous – ride the wave of the Spirit, and recognize the great value of laughter (a merry heart does good like medicine). All of these will help you bring humor into the classroom. Only be sure your humor doesn't put anyone down, and doesn't use sarcasm. See to it that you always honor everyone and you stay positive as you laugh together.

Students rank "sense of humor and ability to laugh in the classroom" as third in importance out of a list of 17 items. "Interesting subject" was ranked first and "interaction between teacher and student" second. Well, we have an interesting subject, "how to hear God's voice." And the *lamad* instructor will know how to cultivate interaction and have a good sense of humor.

CWG Ministries has a book and a college course on *lamad* instruction, developed by Mark and Patti Virkler. The book and the course are both called "Experiencing God in the Small Group." It is highly recommended that you avail yourself of at least the book, and preferably the entire correspondence course. They are available at www.cwgministries.org and www.cluonline.com or by calling the headquarters of Communion With God Ministries and Christian Leadership University (1-800-466-6961).

Side Note: Instructors ranked "humor in the classroom" as thirteen out of fifteen items. It appears that most instructors do not understand the great value of bringing humor into the classroom. For additional help, do a Google

search on “developing humor.” I found six million articles. All you need is **a couple of ideas that work well for you** and you are off and running, making your classes a time of joy and laughter as you learn together with your students and share your follies along the way.

In teaching the all-day weekend seminar people get tired. When it is clear people are tired, give them a break. If it is not time for a regular break then do a one-minute stand and stretch break, and instruct them on a few stretching exercises which are modest and which all can do. Reach for the ceiling. Twist all the way around to the right, and then to the left. Touch your toes. Run in place.

If, in following flow, you get carried away in one area a bit, you may need to condense another area. That is fine. We honor flow and we follow flow. Just make sure you have received from the Lord pictures of the key things He wants to impart to the students in each session, and speak from those pictures. (For more training in this area see our booklet and CD’s on “Spirit-anointed Teaching” and our college course “Experiencing God in the Small Group.”)

Use stories all the time (Matt. 13:34 – without a parable He taught them not). Observe and follow Mark’s use of stories. The purpose of the story is to **help people see** – to help “the light come on” concerning **how a biblical truth can be easily applied in one’s life**.

If a person wants to pick a fight with you over a point, *don’t fight*. Tell them that you honor them and their position and ask that they would do the same with you. Explain that you are both free to hold different opinions and you are both free to change your mind as you grow in the Lord. Let them know you have changed your mind often and that is fine with you if the two of you disagree.

Mark has a sign in his office that reads, “Don’t bother to agree with me; I’ve already changed my mind.” If the path of the Lord gets brighter and brighter until the full dawning of Christ in our hearts, then we will continue to see things differently as we grow in the Lord. That is fine. That is the way it is supposed to be. We honor every step we and others take as they grow in the Lord. We do not fight, because the anointing flows when we have a spirit of unity, honor and respect for one another (Ps. 133:1-3).

Encourage students to ask questions on the topic you are discussing for the week. Ask, “Any questions or thoughts?” This gets people involved. Teach that they are to ask questions *which they feel the group would be interested in*. If it is a personal question which they sense would not be of interest to the group at large, then they should save that question and ask you during the break time.

If they ask a question you have never reflected on, tell them you have never pondered that and thus do not have a Spirit-anointed answer for them on the spot, but that you will pray and seek God concerning this. This is a powerful statement of humility and reality and needs to be demonstrated and seen by all.

It’s great if others try to answer someone’s question. However, if it becomes clear in your heart that the answers are not anointed, not flowing from divine revelation, then encourage the class to pray about the question and you will all come back to it the following week and spend a few minutes discussing what God has spoken to each of you on it. This may be a great way to begin the following week’s class. I would recommend students journal about it and come back to class prepared to share their journaling.

Make corporate confessions during classtime as the Spirit leads. It is good to speak forth what we believe, and to repent whenever necessary.

This lets your students stay with you in a *posture of agreement*, and as a coach you are leading them into the place they need to be. Therefore, when I have described a place in my life where I needed to repent, and I can sense that many in the class would like to take a similar step I say, “If you would like to pray a similar prayer of repentance, then say this after me...”

Of course, the first half of repentance is what I am going to turn away from and ask cleansing for. The second half of my prayer of repentance is what I am going to *turn to* and do from this day forward through the power of the Holy Spirit. Thus, it becomes *my confession of what I now believe and choose to live, and as such, is very powerful and life-giving.*

So I lead them in both parts of this prayer of repentance. I teach them that I see repentance as positive. Repentance allows me to move away from things which have kept me in prison, and allows me to soar to new heights in the Spirit. People love doing this together when the anointing of the Spirit is present, and people move forward in their lives through these corporate confessions.

Do we want background music during the journaling times?

I recommend *not* using background music during the journaling times as it can easily become a disruptive force *if not done exactly right*. I have chosen not to use music during corporate journaling. If you do use it, it must meet the following requirements:

1. It must be very soft – *barely audible* – so it does not intrude into people’s consciousness.
2. It must be music with *no words* and no melody that people could sing along with in their hearts or minds, as this would direct their thoughts and interfere with their journaling.
3. It must be music with *no crescendos*, as this will intrude into people’s consciousness and interfere with their journaling.
4. It must be music *you have successfully journaled to in the past*. Never try music out on others which you have not successfully used yourself.
5. Finally, realize that it must be a generic style which can minister the anointing to *everyone* in your group!

The Call: Setting people free by leading them into intimacy with their Maker is one of the most fulfilling things you will ever do. The teaching on How to Hear God’s Voice can be a powerful tool in the hands of an anointed teacher. If this message resonates in your heart as something that you want to share with others, if this is a part of the call of God on your life, I challenge you to become a Certified Instructor of the How to Hear God’s Voice seminar and course. We are looking for thousands of Certified Instructors to come alongside this message and help us present it to the world. Will you be one of them?

More information on becoming a Certified Instructor is available at www.cwgministries.org/certified