

Thirdmill Leader Training

11

What if my students don't have Thirdmill resources to study outside of class?

Manuscript



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Biblical Education. For the World. For Free.

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ABOUT THIRDMILL

Founded in 1997, Thirdmill is a non-profit Evangelical Christian ministry dedicated to providing:

Biblical Education. For the World. For Free.

Our goal is to offer free Christian education to millions of pastors and Christian leaders worldwide who lack sufficient training for ministry. We are meeting this goal by producing and globally distributing an unparalleled multimedia seminary curriculum in English, Arabic, Chinese, Russian, and Spanish. Our partner ministries are also translating our curriculum into more than 20 additional languages. Consisting of graphic-driven videos, printed instruction, and internet resources, Thirdmill curriculum is designed to be used by schools, groups, and individuals, both online and in local learning communities. We also offer free, structured, certified biblical and theological training in multiple languages through our Thirdmill Institute.

Over the years, we have developed a highly cost-effective method of producing multimedia lessons of the finest content and quality. Our graphic designers, illustrators, and producers adhere to the highest production standards and use state-of-the-art equipment and techniques. Our writers and editors are theologically trained educators, our translators are theologically astute native speakers of their target languages, and our lessons contain the insights of hundreds of respected seminary professors and pastors from around the world.

In order to accomplish our distribution goals, Thirdmill has forged strategic partnerships with churches, seminaries, Bible schools, missionaries, Christian broadcasters, satellite television providers, and other organizations. These relationships have already resulted in the distribution of millions of video lessons to indigenous leaders, pastors, and seminary students. Our websites also serve as avenues of distribution and provide additional materials to supplement our lessons, including audio sermons, lectures, electronic books, and materials on how to start your own learning community.

Thirdmill is recognized by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) corporation. We depend on the generous, tax-deductible contributions of churches, foundations, businesses, and individuals. For more information about our ministry, and to learn how you can get involved, please visit www.thirdmill.org.

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11

What if my students don't have Thirdmill resources to study outside of class?

Thirdmill resources play vital roles in helping you impact the knowledge, ministry and life of everyone attending a Thirdmill class. But what if your students don't have Thirdmill resources to study outside of class?

Some students have little or no personal access to our Lesson Series, Lesson Guides and Application Guides. In some settings, due to limited financial resources, students don't have audio or video devices available to view or listen to Thirdmill lessons on their own. And even making copies of our manuscripts and Lesson Guides can be too costly.

Rev. Pier Benites, Facultad Teologica Evangelica, Guatemala

The county where we live has been rated as the poorest county in the nation, and the basic food that they eat is corn and beans. These pastors have to grow, plant and grow, corn and beans in order to support their family because the churches are not giving enough to support the pastors. So, a typical pastor is that person that has to work every day in the fields harvesting corn, beans and some vegetables, and then he has to set aside some time to study and to come to study with us, too.

Some students live in regions where technology is very limited, and downloading or streaming our resources at home is nearly impossible.

Rev. Yosef Desta, Grace Ethiopian Church, Indianapolis

In Ethiopia, around 80% of the population are living in rural areas. So, we are talking about people who live in rural parts of the world. I'm not talking about people in Addis, the capital, that might have access to internet or even some, even Bible schools in the country. But in order to address the ministers, the pastors, church leaders in rural areas, I think there is a strong possibility that we can use the DVD, audio and the hardcopy material.

Sometimes, the threat of persecution keeps students from having Thirdmill resources outside of class.

Alexander B., Central Asia (translation)

We never keep DVD masters at home. Why? Because the police search Christian homes, and when they find Thirdmill DVDs, they confiscate them and punish Christians with a large penalty or fine.

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That's why we store Thirdmill lessons on a hard drive and hide them away.

Of course, it's always better when students have their own access to Thirdmill materials so they can use them to prepare for their classes at home. But many simply don't have this opportunity. What strategy should a Thirdmill teacher follow in these circumstances? What practical steps can you take to impact the knowledge, ministries and lives of these students?

There are many ways to reach your goals as you teach students who have no access to Thirdmill materials outside of class. And we encourage you to do what is best for your situation. However, we recommend the following strategy:

Start by making each class session about 90 minutes in length. Then, divide each session into seven basic steps:

- an opening time of prayer
- a review and introduction
- a time for new content
- an assessment of student comprehension
- application of the material to ministry and life
- assignments for the next session
- a closing prayer

Prior to each class, we also recommend that you have your students do some preparation at home. Of course, if your students don't have access to Thirdmill materials outside of class, they won't be able to go over the lessons in advance. But, as we'll point out in a moment, it's always wise to give them some simple assignments that they can do before you meet together.

Now, let's assume you have 90 minutes for a class session. As in all circumstances, begin with a time of prayer for God's blessing. This will encourage students to seek God's leading as you begin your session.

Then, you should set the stage for your session by taking 10 minutes or so for what we may call "review and introduction." In your first session, introduce your students to the big ideas of the entire Lesson Series. In subsequent classes, remind students of these big ideas, and summarize some key points they'll have learned in earlier sessions.

It's also important during this time to introduce three or four key points you want your students to learn in this class session. You can often draw these items from the Review Questions that appear in the Lesson Guide.

Dr. Biao Chen, Thirdmill (translation)

I usually bring up some guiding questions first, often the ones in our Lesson Guides. I use this method to prepare them for learning from the Thirdmill lessons. The advantage to asking these questions first is that once the student starts watching these lessons and the specifics in

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them, they can remember what the important questions are, and that strengthens the effects of their learning.

After your review and introduction, you're ready to move to the new lesson content that you've chosen for this session. In most situations, it's good to reserve about 30 minutes to look at new content. All Thirdmill lessons are divided into major sections, and each major section is divided into smaller segments. One or more of these sections or segments can usually be covered in your class in 25 to 30 minutes.

You and your students may simply read aloud from the manuscript of the lesson. You may listen to the audio version of the lesson. Or you may use a television, computer or projector to watch the Thirdmill lesson together.

Larissa P., Karaganda, Kazakhstan (translation)

In our church, we have Bible studies and home groups, and Thirdmill materials are very convenient to use in these settings. People watch small parts of the video, then discuss them, and look into Scripture passages given in the video. This is how we work with Thirdmill in our home groups.

Once you've presented the new content to your class, take about 15 minutes to check your students' comprehension. Did they get the main ideas of the lesson? Start by taking them back to the key points you brought up earlier in your introduction to the lesson. Work with them to find out what you need to explain further. If there are other issues that come up, you can address them during this time as well.

After checking your students' comprehension of the new content, it's very important to turn immediately toward applying this content to ministry and life. Take about 25 minutes or so for this part. Work hard to limit yourself to no more than two or three significant, practical issues so you'll have enough time to deal with each issue in depth.

Rev. Will Savell, The Grace Institute

Just watching a video, just learning the content, is not sufficient. And that's where it's important for our learning community leaders to really focus on helping their groups apply and really reaching a balance in spending their time wisely when they all meet together.

Thirdmill Application Guides are especially helpful for this portion of your class. Application Guides offer multiple Case Studies, Reflection Questions, and Action Assignments, and you should choose the ones that will work best for your group. You may need to contextualize some of your choices to suit your circumstances. But the guides will help you find ways to make the content of the lesson immediately relevant for your students' ministries and lives.

As part of application, consider telling the students how the content of the lesson has impacted your own ministry and life. Or you may want to point to examples of how it has

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impacted other people you know. And it's always good to ask questions that help students reflect on their own lives.

Now, before you dismiss your class, use the last few minutes to give your students some simple assignments to complete before they return for their next session. Remember that they have no access to Thirdmill materials at home, so you might have them write down some questions from the Lesson Guide to answer before the next class. You may also want to give them a specific Action Assignment to carry out from the Application Guide. Finally, close the session in prayer. If you have time for another session with your students, take a break, and then repeat the entire process.

Teachers face many challenges when their students can't study Thirdmill resources outside of class. But if you follow a simple strategy like this, you'll still be able to impact their knowledge, their ministries and their personal lives in significant ways.