

Thirdmill Leader Training

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What if my students can understand
Thirdmill's basic content on their own?

Manuscript



thirdmill

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 hundreds of thousands of pastors and Christian leaders around the world who lack sufficient training for ministry. We are meeting this goal by producing and globally distributing an unparalleled multimedia seminary curriculum in English, Arabic, Mandarin, Russian, and Spanish. Our curriculum is also being translated into more than a dozen other languages through our partner ministries. The curriculum consists of graphic-driven videos, printed instruction, and internet resources. It is designed to be used by schools, groups, and individuals, both online and in learning communities.

Over the years, we have developed a highly cost-effective method of producing award-winning multimedia lessons of the finest content and quality. 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 addition, our graphic designers, illustrators, and producers adhere to the highest production standards using state-of-the-art equipment and techniques.

In order to accomplish our distribution goals, Thirdmill has forged strategic partnerships with churches, seminaries, Bible schools, missionaries, Christian broadcasters and satellite television providers, and other organizations. These relationships have already resulted in the distribution of countless 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 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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What if my students can understand Thirdmill's basic content on their own?

Some students are independent learners and can grasp much or most of the content of our lessons using our resources outside of class. What strategy should you follow with students who can understand Thirdmill resources on their own?

Students can use Thirdmill resources successfully outside of class for different reasons. Some may have strong educational backgrounds and can understand Thirdmill lessons, use the Lesson Guides and draw from our Application Guides with ease.

Rev. Hutch Garmany, Grace Community, Trenton, GA

I had an opportunity a number of years ago to go over to central Asia and be able to work with some pastors that are being trained over there. I was really astonished as I'm coming in, and we're getting to interact over these concepts in the videos that I was getting to teach, and it was because they, before I had gotten there, had been able to work through the videos and the materials, and we were literally walking through the class together in a classroom setting. And so I saw in a very real and tangible way how Thirdmill was allowing me, a foreign teacher coming in, being able to really teach and communicate these crucial biblical concepts to church planters in central Asia.

In some settings, students become independent learners as they gain more experience in studying the Scriptures and theology. At first, they may need a lot of help from their teachers. But after they study a few Thirdmill Lesson Series, they can learn much of the content on their own.

Students also become independent learners when they take advantage of Thirdmill online classrooms. Both myThirdmill.org and thirdmillseminary.org offer students the opportunity to join an online classroom. Take a look at these sites. They have different expectations of students, depending on the program, but both offer step-by-step guidance through the content of our curriculum.

Louis Essac, Student

Third Millennium is doing a great job to give me like a road map, like a discipline with the lessons and quizzes and study guides, and everything that makes it organized.

In some ways, leading a learning community with independent learners is easier because they've already learned so much before they come to class. And since these students are growing in their knowledge of the Scriptures and theology outside of class, you can give more

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focus to matters of ministry and life when you meet together. You should, of course, always lead your class in ways that will be most effective for your particular students. But when students have already grasped the big ideas, we recommend the following strategy:

Make each class session about 90 minutes in length. Then, separate each session into seven basic steps:

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

To begin with, you should plan to build your class sessions on your students' preparation. Before they come to class, require these students to watch, read or listen to the entire lesson. Instruct them to concentrate primarily on the 25- to 30-minute portion of the lesson you'll cover in your session. As they prepare, either individually or in small groups, they should learn everything they can, fill in the outline of the Lesson Guide with extensive notes, and be prepared to explain their notes in class. And more than this, as they study the lesson, these students should jot down lots of questions that come to mind.

Alexander B., Central Asia, translation

One of the methods that we use in our seminary is to give students Thirdmill DVDs even before we meet with them for the course classes. They study video lectures on their own; then they meet in groups and have discussions with the group leader. They also write notes and use Lesson Guides. So, when we meet with them, we meet not to begin teaching, but in order to wind up the learning process, to conclude. By that time students' understanding has grown, and they are better able to understand the ideas that professors want to bring to their minds. Thus, they'll ask only deep questions. They're interested in complicated topics. This way, when we meet with them, it's the end of the learning process, not the beginning.

Start your session with an opening prayer for God's blessing. Focus your students on God and his wisdom as you study together.

Spend the first 10 minutes or so on review and introduction. Quickly go over the big ideas of the entire Lesson Series. After your first session, you can also highlight several key points that you've learned in previous class sessions. Then introduce three to four key points that you plan to cover in the current session.

After your review and introduction, take about 10 minutes to check your students' comprehension of the work they did outside of class. You can assume that these students have a solid understanding of most of the main ideas of the lesson, so you don't need to spend much time here. Go back to the three to four key points that you brought up in your review

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and introduction, and ask one or two students to explain what they learned as they prepared for class. Also, have a few students share some of the questions they wrote down while they were preparing. Comment now and then, and help the students refine the answers. If there are other issues that come up, you can address these later in the class.

Now it's time for you to present the new content of this session's lesson for 20 minutes or so. Remember that these students have already grasped most of the basic content of the lesson, so you don't need to spend any time watching, reading or listening to it.

Instead, rather than simply repeating what your students already understand, choose three to four key points of the lesson, and expand on the content. You might want to use images from the video lesson as you apply the content to other facets of Scripture and theology. You can work with your own notes in the outline of the Lesson Guide, explore a few details, and explain how a few facets of the lesson relate to other biblical and theological concepts. Discuss what key sentences in the lesson mean, and examine related ideas that will be useful to your students. Highlight facets of biblical passages in the lesson, and add others to your discussion. And of course, as much as possible, interact with your students all along the way.

Dr. Andy Gemmill, Cornhill Scotland Pastors' Training Course

We've used a number of your units, and the students have worked on that at home. They come together in the classroom. And one of the things we try and do in the classroom is, well, "So what if the Trinity is true? Why does that matter in life, and ministry, and reality?" So, we use Thirdmill for data download, and then we use the classroom time, rather than for just transferring information, to try and process that, unearth it, in things to do with ministry and life.

With these kinds of students, you have the opportunity to give much more time to applying the lesson to their ministries and lives. Spend about 40 minutes here, but limit yourself to two or three practical issues so you can thoroughly discuss them.

As you lead this part of your class session, the Application Guide will help you. Application Guides offer a variety of options, so choose the Case Studies, Reflection Questions and Action Assignments that work best for your group. Be sure to adjust the ones you've chosen to suit your circumstances. Also, be prepared to share your experiences and the experiences of others as they relate to the application points. And be ready to support your views with biblical references. From time to time, it may be helpful to divide your students into small groups, give each group several Reflection Questions from the Application Guide, have them formulate answers and then share their answers with the entire class.

At the end of your class, take the last few minutes to give your students assignments. You may want them to review the lesson you've just finished by completing one or more of the Action Assignments from the Application Guide. Also, be sure to have them prepare thoroughly for your next session. Have them watch, listen to or read the next part of the lesson, fill out the Lesson Guide and answer the appropriate Lesson Guide questions for your next class.

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Once you've made assignments, be sure to close in prayer. If you have time before your students leave, you can take a short break and repeat this entire process in another session.

It's a great joy when students are able to use and understand Thirdmill resources outside of class. It frees the teacher to go beyond the basic content of our lessons. You can expand your students' knowledge and help them explore more fully the implications of the lesson for their ministries and lives.