



*Are you sitting silently in Sunday School,
hoping the teacher won't call on you?
Or maybe you're hoping your teacher will call on you.*

By Ryan Brown

Sacrament meeting is over and you're having fun talking in the hall with your friends—until your dad walks by and, in that voice that says you'd better obey, reminds you that class starts in one minute. You're sad to stop talking, but you and your friends make it to class just before it starts. When the teacher asks you to take a moment to think about the Savior, it gets really quiet. Then he asks for class members to share their thoughts. You'd felt fine talking to your friends in the hall, but this is different. Now you have to talk about spiritual things. And talking isn't so easy anymore.

Do you ever feel like this? If commenting in Sunday School, priesthood meetings, or Young Women groups can seem scary, think about why you're nervous to share and what you can do in that situation. Here are some good places to start.



WHAT IF I DON'T WANT TO SHARE?

It might seem like there's a lot of pressure to speak up in class, especially during moments of awkward silence. Then it's a relief when others finally share their thoughts—you won't have to talk, and, even more important, you also gained insight from the comments. Now think about this: Just as you were glad to hear from the others, they probably want to hear from *you* too.

Maybe, though, there are other reasons why you're not commenting. Is it because you're having a bad day and don't want to talk, or is it because you're unsure of what to say? On days like these, remember that talking about something often helps you think about things in different ways than if you just listen. You'll also be less likely to become distracted with other things and can pay better attention to the lesson if you're thinking about what you can share or add to the discussion.



WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO SAY OR I'M WORRIED MY STORIES/THOUGHTS AREN'T "GOOD ENOUGH"?

Don't fall into Satan's trap of thinking that you're not "smart" enough or "spiritual" enough to talk about the gospel or share your testimony. Every sincere testimony has the power to touch someone's heart. If you feel like your testimony isn't very strong or is still just starting to grow, consider the advice of Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: "We gain or strengthen a testimony by bearing it. Someone even suggested that some testimonies are better gained on the feet bearing them than on the knees praying for them" ("Testimony," *Ensign*, May 2008, 27).

If you feel like you should say something but don't want to raise your hand (you're secretly hoping the teacher will call on you so you can share the idea without



WHAT IF MY TEACHER TALKS SO MUCH THAT I NEVER HAVE A CHANCE TO COMMENT?

It can be difficult to speak up in a class where the teacher dominates the conversation. You could approach your teacher after class and kindly let him or her know you'd like to participate more but that you can't seem to find a good time to comment. Another way to let the teacher know you want to be more involved is to ask before class if he or she needs any help sharing a portion of the lesson or reading something.

Sometimes a teacher may feel inspired to talk longer or testify more rather than ask the class questions. Instead of getting frustrated when the teacher isn't leaving time for you to talk, listen carefully to what he or she is saying and think about how you can apply it in your life.



seeming too eager about it), try to set that worry aside. If the Spirit is prompting you to share something, it's probably because you have a perspective or experience that someone else really needs to hear.

Remember, too, that when you contribute in your lessons by bearing testimony of what the teacher is teaching, you add a “second witness” to the message, regardless of how eloquent you are (see Matthew 18:16 and 2 Corinthians 13:1).



WHAT IF ONE PERSON ANSWERS EVERY QUESTION?

In every class there will be people who talk more than others or who seem to share every time the teacher asks a question. Don't fall into the trap of making fun of them or thinking, “I wish they'd stop talking.” Enjoy the opportunity to learn from the perspective of others and to grow from their experiences. Some people think through things best when they're speaking out loud, so be patient and loving as they strive to learn the gospel too.

And remember that they may comment only because nobody else is—so if you raise your hand first, they may be grateful to not answer every question.

And if you're the teacher and notice that only one person seems to be answering the questions, you could ask specific people to share their thoughts on a topic rather than asking the question to the whole class.



SHOULD I SHARE EXPERIENCES THAT ARE PERSONAL?

Personal stories or experiences can add insight about a gospel principle and can help others understand what's being discussed in class. Just be careful in what you share, because some stories are too personal or sacred to share, some involve other people who may not want the story shared, and some can be embarrassing for others to hear because they haven't experienced the same things you have. But sometimes you may have had an experience so that you *could* share it with others in the future (see President Henry B. Eyring, “O Remember, Remember,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 66; [lds.org/go/storyNE7](https://www.lds.org/go/storyNE7)).

Seek the promptings and guidance of the Spirit to judge the situation and to decide what to share or not. You never know when your experience is exactly what someone else needs to hear.

BORED IN CLASS?

Strive to be like President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985), who was once asked, “What do you do when you find yourself in a boring sacrament meeting?” His response: “I don't know. I've never been in one” (see Donald L. Hallstrom, “Converted to His Gospel through His Church,” *Ensign*, May 2012, 15).

Here are some ideas to help you stay more focused in class:

- Take notes. It really does make a difference.
- Some people learn better while doodling. If that sounds like you, consider sketching an example of what the teacher is talking about. Just make sure your focus stays on the class discussion and not on the details of the drawing itself—the doodle is supposed to be a learning tool, not a world-famous piece of art.
- Invite your friends or classmates to reverently race to see who can most quickly find the scripture references that your teacher uses.
- Think of questions you have about what the teacher is saying or about other topics that are closely related. Ask your questions and write down the answers in a notebook. **NE**

Ryan Brown lives in Utah, USA.

