



## Faith Is Not Blind Course Ideas

This course is not just about the specific material in the Faith Is Not Blind book. It is about teaching students a pattern and a perspective that will help them to connect to God and Jesus Christ when they have questions, doubts, and concerns. It is about helping students to understand how they think and how they learn in a safe, non-judgmental environment. This epistemological approach will give them tools to not only find answers to their questions, but to understand why their questions are so important. Rather than looking for someone to provide answers for them, they will learn to find their own faith and cultivate their own relationship with God and Jesus Christ. As their teacher, you can accompany them on their journey and mentor them in the process.

### **Using the Faith Is Not Blind Book to Teach Students How to Read More Effectively**

As you connect the principles and patterns in the book to your students, use it as an opportunity to teach them about how they learn and how they respond to new information.

- You could teach your students how to annotate or mark in their books/digital books. Teach them how to underline and circle significant words, phrases, and ideas. Teach them how to write in the margins of the book/digital book.
- Encourage them to take notes both in the book and in a notebook or in the notes on their phone or computer. Ask them to share the thoughts they have written down or taken notes on in small groups or with the class.

### **Using *Faith Is Not Blind* and the Faith is Not Blind Videos/Podcasts**

The Faith Is Not Blind Podcast contains short interviews with people sharing their personal stories. The Faith Is Not Blind book contains specific principles and the Podcast shows those principles in practice. They are real people sharing their real stories about how they applied different principles in the book.

Students can benefit from hearing the stories of people who are their own age who have gotten to “the other side of complexity.” There are also stories from people who are older than the students who have learned to how to answer questions and nurture their faith.

You can use the podcasts as sort of “case studies” to help the students come up with potential ideas, develop compassion for others who are struggling, and to observe those who may have struggled with an issue that is familiar to a particular student. Watching the podcasts can help your students to feel that they aren’t alone in their struggles. The podcasts may also help them see possibilities that they weren’t aware of before.

- The podcasts are short enough that you could use class time to watch the suggested podcast. You could also just watch a portion of it and then discuss just that 2-3 minute clip.
- Have students choose a podcast episode to watch or listen to on their own. Have them share with the class which episode they watched or listen to and what they learned from it.
- Use the podcast interview to facilitate small and large group discussions (see suggestions below).

### **Teaching the Vocabulary (Words of the Day)**

*“[I have] come to believe that in actuality my problem was not faith, but finding the words to express my faith.”*

(Richard Bushman, quoted in Faith Is Not Blind p. 4)

As part of the principle-based approach to this course, we strongly suggest teaching the students specific vocabulary words to help them understand the concepts in the book and their applications. Learning these words will help them understand both the cognitive and spiritual processes that they are experiencing and to view these processes as a healthy part of their development. As you teach them specific vocabulary, you can remind them about how their cognitive abilities and their spiritual abilities are connected.

- You can write the “Words of the Day” on the board along with their definitions and then discuss how knowing the vocabulary can enhance their perspective and their paradigm. You may also want to ask them to underline or circle words in the book that they don’t understand or have questions about so that you can write those words on the board and define them.
  - Some Suggested Words of the Day
    - Ambiguity
    - Paradigm
    - Paradigm Shift
    - Epistemology/Epistemological
    - Expectation Failure
    - Black and White Thinking
    - Burden of Proof

### **Suggested Writing Activities**

*“When we feel speechless because of our growing pains, and we wonder if something is wrong. Would that mean we are also faithless? Probably not—but we might need a more complete vocabulary”* (Faith Is Not Blind p. 5).

Why are short writing assignments so useful for this particular curriculum? Not only do they help students process their deeper thoughts, but they give them a chance to think through complex ideas and to discover what their own thoughts are. There is also an important connection to finding the words to express what they're feeling, especially when they're dealing with their own "complexities."

### **Short in-class writing assignments:**

These are called "rush writes" and only need to be a paragraph or two. Give them 5-10 minutes to write. Explain to them that they can share their thoughts freely and they don't need to worry about grammar or punctuation.

- Give them a prompt like "Find a passage from the book that you find significant, revealing, or relatable. What is it about this passage that stands out to you?"
- "Write for five minutes about a time when you had expectation failure. In other words, describe a time in your life when the ideal you expected didn't happen and you had to deal with the gap between the ideal and the real. How did you feel? How did you cope with it?"

### **Small and Large Group Discussions**

Having small group discussions about certain passages in the book will help students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and feelings. After they write, you can have them share in a small group and discuss them. (Give them the option to share. They can just listen if they're more comfortable.)

You can also give them a specific question to discuss in a small group like the following:

- If you feel comfortable, share what you wrote with your group. Talk to each other about how "the gap" between the ideal and the real feels. Why is it important to recognize that difficulty? Share what you have learned from having to confront "complexity" in your life.
- After the small groups discuss a passage from the book or discuss a specific question, ask one person from the group report to the class afterwards. Then ask the students in the class to respond.
- After listening to the beginning portion of a podcast, you could pause the podcast and then ask the class how they might respond to the "complexity" the person in the podcast has. Ask them, "How do you think they might feel?" Or "If this were a friend of yours what would you say to them?" This will not only encourage empathy for others, but it will help students who might share some of the same concerns as the person in the podcast. After the short discussion, listen to or watch the rest of the podcast.

## **Sample Weekly Schedule:**

### *Week One:*

Prologue  
Faith Is Not Blind. Or Deaf. Or Dumb  
Suggested Podcast: Elder Hafen

### *Week Two:*

Ch. 1 "The Simplicity Beyond the Complexity"  
Suggested Podcast: Kristine  
Suggested Podcast: Janae: "I didn't know you could believe and then doubt and then believe again"

### *Week Three:*

Ch. 2 "Simplicity, Complexity, and the Internet Age"  
Suggested Podcast: Janiece

### *Week Four:*

Ch. 4 "Some Internet Soft Spots"  
Suggested Podcast: David P

### *Week Five:*

Ch. 5 "Productive Ambiguity"  
Suggested Podcast: Emily

### *Week Six:*

Ch. 6 "The Head and the Heart Paradox"  
Suggested Podcast: Marcus

### *Week Seven:*

Ch. 7 "Beyond Balance"  
Suggested Podcast: Tyler

### *Week Eight:*

Ch. 8 "When Do the Angels Come?"  
Suggested Podcast: Christian

### *Week Nine:*

Ch. 9 "The Value of the Veil"  
Suggested Podcast: Terryl Givens Part Two

*Week Ten:*

Ch. 10 "Choosing to Believe"

Suggested Podcast: Jenna

*Week Eleven:*

Ch. 11 "A Witness More Powerful Than Sight"

Suggested Podcast: Bill

*Week Twelve:*

Ch. 12 "Climbing to Know God"

Suggested Podcast: Ben S.

*Week Thirteen:*

Ch. 13 "Life and My Life"

Suggested Podcast: Sarah

*Week Fourteen:*

Ch. 14 "The Benefit of the Doubt and Moving Beyond Complexity"

Suggested Podcast: Loretta

*Week Fifteen:*

Ch. 15 "The Spirit of the Army"

Epilogue

Suggested Podcast: Eric

Please feel free to contact us with questions, comments, or teaching ideas. We'd love to be in contact with you and to hear about your own teaching experiences. It is an honor to be a part of this great work with people like you.

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