

Making A Start With Your Chart

1. As you study a text, assign titles and labels to the content in a way that summarizes the material. Be creative. Placing your own titles on the verses, paragraphs, sections and books of the Bible is one way to read “acquisitively” and make the text your own. They help you retain your insights in neat packages.
2. As you visualize your chart, ask: What are the relationships? What am I trying to show? What’s this chart all about? When I’ve finished it, how am I going to use it?
3. Keep your charts simple. You can always add detail; the challenge is to trim away the clutter. What key ideas, characters, themes, verses, terms and other data from the text ought to take priority? What is the big idea? What structure needs to be shown? What material do you want to see at a glance?
4. If you find that you’ve got too much material to include in a chart, chop it up and make several charts. By the way, too much unrelated data is a clue that you need to go back to the text and do some more observing.
5. Be creative. There are dozens of ways to show relationships in the text. Let your imagination flow. Draw illustrations or symbols if they help. It’s your chart, so make it work for you.
6. Revise your charts in light of your study. No chart can summarize everything. As you continue to study a passage, you’ll gain new insights that should cause you to revise or even redo your chart. Remember, charts are a means to an end, not an end in them. They are useful to the extent that they accurately represent what is in the Biblical text.