

# Sunday School Ministry

## Lesson One

It is imperative for Christians to be centered on God's Word. The only way to do that, is to study it faithfully. Once such way to insure those around you are getting the proper teaching is to conduct Sunday School programs. We can find God's mandate to conduct Sunday Schools in Deuteronomy 31:12,13. (please look this verse up and be prepared to answer questions regarding it).

In the New Testament, Jesus' command is just as direct: “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (Matthew 28:19,20) So, whether you produce your own material, get it from a trusted source, or from your denominational supply chain, the command to teach all things regarding the Word of God is very clear.

In studying Church history, and some secular writings, we learn that the Sunday School program has been around for many years. As early as 1782, when Robert Raikes organized the first educational program of it's kind to meet the needs he saw on the streets of Gloucester England. He would bring children into a local kitchen and teach them rudimentary academics as well as Biblical knowledge. But don't think everything was well accepted ! At first he was mocked, shunned, and found very little encouragement at all. However, over time, opposition gradually diminished and the Sunday School concept began to catch on.

Eventually the concept caught the attention of John Wesley who took the Sunday School program to the next level. He even wrote, “I, verily think these Sunday Schools are the noblest institutions which have been seen in Europe for some centuries, and will increase more and more, provided the teachers and instructors do their duties”.

However, the Sunday School program reached it's greatest growth in America. William Elliot opened up his own kitchen to teach the children of Oak Ridge Virginia. Eventually Sunday School Unions were established in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia. The object of these “Unions” were to encourage teaching at the level of the child, to emphasize the value of children and youth, to promote teaching aids, and to improve classroom instructions. From this point forward, Sunday School programs became increasingly popular, structured, and attended.

Eventually, the American Sunday School Union became known as the American Missionary Fellowship. By the time the first national convention met in 1832 the AMF (or ASSU as it was known by some), had already established 2,867 Sunday Schools.

Sadly, the early decades of the twentieth century recorded the American Sunday School movement was already in decline. This was in part due to the merging of many different religious groups which resulted in less promotions and a dramatic decrease in enthusiasm. However, by 1945, the National Sunday School Association was created by members of the NAE (National Association of Evangelicals), and things began to turn around again.

So, with all this work that has gone into the creation of the Sunday School, just exactly what should be it's function? Well, first and foremost, the Sunday School is immeasurable to the local Church. For many years the Sunday School was described as the “teaching arm” or “evangelistic arm” of the Church. Sunday School programs emphasize the teaching role of the ministry just as the missionary conference emphasizes world evangelism. It is wise to remember that the local Church has several functions. The first is to Preach. The second is to baptize new believers. The third is to teach, and the fourth is to Evangelize. Preaching brings them to salvation. Baptism bring them into obedience, and Evangelism brings them into service. But, without proper, sound, biblical teaching, everything would come to a grinding halt.

One of the primary objectives of the local church should be to reach people in the local community. Jesus told His disciples that they would be witnesses for Him “both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Notice that Jesus told them to go to Jerusalem first. This was their home town. Obviously the local Sunday School ministry of your church has very little affect on those in other towns or countries, but it can have a great affect on those in your very own community. This is where the Sunday School Ministry has it's greatest affect.

Some of the goals your Sunday School should try to attain to is first and foremost to teach those in your local community the absolute truth of God's Word. Secondly you should be striving to equip those who attend with the tools they need to go evangelize themselves. Thirdly, your local Sunday School should should be instrumental in helping christian live a vibrant Christian life. And Fourthly, it should help to achieve loyalty to your church, and foster responsibility to the community.



# Sunday School Ministry

## Lesson Two

The great commission is found in Matt. 28:19,20... “Go ye therefore....teaching, baptizing, making disciples. This commission, as Christ indicates is the goal of Sunday School Ministry. In order to achieve this goal there are three subordinate and progressive goals...evangelizing edifying and equipping. The Sunday School is responsible to reach out into its surrounding community. The average Sunday School is lacking in this area.

When Sunday Schools are conducted effectively, Evangelism takes place.

Act\_1:8 goes further in telling us “HOW” to fulfill the great commission to go... “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”.

Notice that they were to go to Jerusalem first. That was their home town. This is where Sunday Schools can really get involved in the “going”. Sunday Schools can reach your local home town...door to door, person to person.

However, before anything can be done, one must have a “VISION”. A vision for the lost condition of uneached people in the community is absolutely necessary for the church to begin attaining the goal of evangelism. We must learn to see people the way Christ saw them, to see eternity as Christ knows eternity, and to see our ministries as Christ sees them. We should pray each day that we could have the eyes of Christ for all those around us...to shed the eyes of flesh, and to look anew with spiritual eyes.

Secondly, before we can every evangelize our community through the local Church, we must also have 'COMMPASSION". When Scripture reports that Jesus had compassion on the people, it also indicates that this was not merely a sudden or passing emotion. This attitude was constant with the Lord, and, thus, must also be a constant attribute within us. Compassion for the person next door. Compassion for that person you work with that is always causing problems. Compassion for that relative who has done you wrong. Compassion for every person. Now, let me say this..."Compassion" does not mean “acceptance”. We do not have compassion or acceptance for the sin, or the ungodly lifestyles. We have compassion for the soul, for the person God can make them into, but not the sin. We are to hate the sin.

Thirdly, we must be “INVOLVED”. Most people who come to the Lord in salvation, or who comes to your Sunday School service, are people who you know and have some form of relationship with.

“...many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick (Matthew 9:10-12).

If you want to be effective in ANY Church ministry, in leading people to Jesus, or in discipline those who get saved, you must first build some type of relationship with them. Connecting with them in some way, on some level, and building upon that relationship. Many times this starts as a simply “hi” while passing on the sidewalk or street, or in the store, or at the gas station. Handing someone a Gospel tract and saying, “I can about you” can be that connection that gets things started. Saying “hello” to your neighbor and asking how they are doing, or even visiting someone in the hospital, or ministering to some other physical need might just be the start of that relationship that brings them into salvation. Teachers are more able to win their students respect and love when they participate in their social events. Planning youth activities, or recreational programs with them are often the most productive times teachers ever spend with their students.

And lastly, “LIVING BY EXAMPLE” must be part of your Sunday School ministry. Good teachers and leaders will NOT limit their ministries to Sunday morning activities. They know that they cannot evangelize their students simply by what they say. Students need to observe consecrated Christian lives. The old adage, “people believe what you do more then what you say” is so true. Teach by example, lead by your behavior, live what you preach, are all very true statements.

In conclusion then, a good Sunday School ministry will have a vision, will have compassion, will be involved, and will lead by example. However, these same principles should apply to any Christian who is spirit lead and striving to fulfill the great commission to “go ye therefore”.

# **Sunday School Ministry**

## Test Two

(1) What are the four main thoughts given in this lesson for a successful Sunday School.

(2) Why is it important to have a "Vision"?

(3) In having "compassion" for others, what is one aspect of their life we should NOT have compassion for?

(4) Why should we be involved in those people's lives we wish to evangelize?

(5) Why is it important to teach by example, as well as by word?

# Sunday School Ministry

## Lesson Three

In the previous chapter, evangelism was considered as the first step or goal of a Sunday School ministry. The second is edifying or building up faith in Christ. Sunday School ministry begins by confronting people with the truth of the Gospel. Accepting this truth, however, is just the beginning. The Sunday School must be prepared to teach God's Word to believers. The Lord's commission to make disciples involves this area of edification..the teaching the Word of God.

As we mentioned in the previous lesson, to build up other believers, we must first influence them with our own lives. No one except Christ is perfect, but, as a child and servant of Jesus Christ, people should see Christ in us. This is in essence what a "Christian" is...a person who others see Christ in. I have said many times, "we have no right to call ourselves a Christian. Before we are truly a Christian, OTHERS must see Christ in us". We also mentioned in the last lesson that we must spend time with those we wish to minister to, or disciple, especially in a Sunday School setting. Setting an example, and getting to know those we are ministering to are both good first steps in edification.

Every person involved in the Sunday School ministry should be working to edify (instruct or improve (someone) morally or intellectually.) The Pastor, by virtue of His leadership role should encourage spiritual growth each week from the pulpit and through personal relationships. His relationship with the Sunday School participants may simply be greeting them as they come off the bus, meeting them at the door, or a simply "hello" as He passes them in the hall. But, these brief encounters can be some of the most important as He is the one that everyone looks to.

Parents, all though they may not know it are also very much involved. From the decision to accept Christ as Savior to faithful church attendance, Parents generally are the first line in setting the spiritual pace for their children. When parents do not faithfully attend services, children grow up putting God, and spiritual matters way down on their list of priorities. But, when parents are involved and attending Sunday School and church activities with their children, the children will grow up with spiritual matters at the of their list.

And then the Teacher and other leaders are also very much involved in the edification process. If the teachers and leaders are prepared with the principles and techniques of evangelism, they will be instrumental in their students spiritual growth. Continued education, holy living, spiritual vision, and setting good moral are all attributes the

Christian teacher or leader should exhibit.

However, it should be pointed out that these character traits do not just happen. They are the product of a prayerful life, a dedicated life to Gods Word, Patience, and daily practice. As one studies the Bible, it becomes very clear that those used of God from Genesis to Revelation were men and women who knew the reveled Word of God, who prayed, who were patient, and who were examples of Godly living.

In closing it is important to to remember that the second step or goal in discipline others for Christ is edification. Every person in the church ministry is involved in this edification process as well. Effective teachers gain their students love and respect, spend time with their students outside of class and are honest in relating their own shortcomings and failures.

# **Sunday School Ministry**

## Test Three

(1) What is the second step or goal of a Sunday School?

(2) What is a "Christian" as outlined in this lesson?

(3) What does "edify" mean?

(4) List three groups of people who has a hand in edification within the Sunday School.

(5) What four things, listed in this lesson, help build the character traits of Evangelism and Edification?

# Sunday School Ministry

## Lesson Four

The Sunday Schools primary ministry is disciplining students. In the previous two lessons we looked at the first two goals toward reaching this ministry..that of Evangelism and Edification. Today we are going to look at the third goal and that is “Equipping students to serve Christ. When this step is reached, the Church will start reproducing itself.

In Ephesians 4, Paul clearly identifies the task of the church and Sunday School leadership...

Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:

Eph 4:13 Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:

Note the inseparable relationship between knowledge and behavior. We grow in knowledge, become mature, and thereby are equipped to perform work of service.

Knowledge has to do with information. In the case of Christian growth, information about the Word of God and the truth about God and man lay the foundation not only for salvation, but for Christian growth, and, ultimately service. However, simply knowledge does not produce change in a persons life. They must believe it, and apply it to their life.

Thus, the teacher is not merely someone who imparts knowledge, but is someone who helps the student take that knowledge, verify it, and apply it. Then and only then will the young Christian be equipped to do the work God has for them.

It should be noted that God is never in a hurry to produce effective servants. Remember, Moses spent forty years in the desert. The apostle Paul had a brilliant education in Greek culture and Hebrew theology but was set aside for preparation before he was qualified to serve the Lord. Many times throughout Scripture we see this same principle played out.

So important to study and prepare, God gave the warning in 1 Timothy 5:22 to “lay hands suddenly on no man” and in 2 Timothy 2:5 to, “study to shew thyself approved unto God...”. Spiritual Maturity is a life process, not a final destination.

As a student learn in Sunday School, they should also be given an opportunity to be involved in Ministry as some level. Some Sunday Schools are satisfied with students who achieve content. Others strive for large numbers and emphasize fellowship. But,

those who reproduce themselves, and fulfill the great commission to “go”, are those who get their students involved. This gives them the opportunity to practice and cultivate the skills, and knowledge they are learning. There are many ways to get your Sunday School members involved. How you go about doing this will of course depend upon their age, the health, the abilities, their resources, and of course their spiritual maturity. It can be as simple as having them pray, take up offerings, help with ushering, or maybe even giving them some short lessons to study and then give them the opportunity to teach it themselves. As they grow, mature, and are willing to get involved, continue to expand their involvement, and hopefully, at some point, they will step out and take over a ministry themselves. At this point, reproducing yourself has made a complete cycle, and it is now up to them, to continue the process.... with your guidance of course.

One must never lose sight of the fact that this is not the final step in the Sunday Schools ministry. As previously mentioned, Spiritual growth is a life long process, not something that becomes final at some point. Even after your students have matured and moved on with their own ministry, encouraging them to further their education, reach for further training, and greater faith, is your next step. Remember, the Sunday School ministry is not complete until your students are fully equipped to minister for Christ.

# **Sunday School Ministry**

## Test Four

(1) List the three steps given so far in this class to fulfilling your Sunday School Ministry.

(2) In Ephesians 4, there is an inseparable relationship between Knowledge and ?

(3) Is God ever in a hurry to get people out serving Him?

# Sunday School Ministry

## Lesson Five

Many people make an annual appointment with their doctor for a physical exam. The doctor carefully checks each of the many body systems and utilizes a number of tests to insure an accurate diagnosis of the patients health. The purpose of such an exam is to determine the general level of health and to discover any small problems which, if left untreated, could turn into a bigger problem. If any health concerns are uncovered, the doctor may prescribe medication or another course of treatment. The doctor will also offer a prognosis on what will likely happen if the suggested treatment is, or is not, followed. Most people do not enjoy the process of the exam itself, although they do understand it's importance to maintain optimum health. The Sunday School ministry in many local churches is in need of similar check up. Such an evaluation like a physical exam, can provide a diagnosis of the current health as well as suggest ways the ministry can be improved.

In the previous chapters we looked at three major steps that a Sunday School program must take in order to fulfill the great commission to “go” and “make disciples”. In hindsight, these steps were, Evangelize, Edify, and equip. When looking at the subject of self examination, it stands to reason then that what we should be evaluating is simply how well are we doing in each step...where are we falling short...and what must we do to correct the problem. But, before we evaluate each of these three steps, lets take a moment to look at the “reasons” we should evaluate our Sunday School Ministry.

First, it is Biblical. Take a moment to read 1 Cor. 11:28, and 1 Cor. 11:31-32. In these verses Paul warns that a person should examine themselves before eating partaking of the Lords Supper, and then tells them of consequences if they don't. Then furthermore, we should be evaluating ourselves because God is constantly evaluating us. In Revelation 2 and 3, John rights letters to the seven churches Asia Minor. These letters are essentially Jesus' evaluation of the spiritual life in each Church. Thirdly, the New Testament teaches that every believer, after death, will be evaluated by God at a future event referred to in the New Testament as the “judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). The purpose of this judgment is not to determine one's eternal destiny but rather to evaluate our service to Christ since conversion. Since we will one day give account to God for our actions, should we not be diligent in evaluating every ministry to make sure they are pleasing to God?

Secondly, Evaluation is practical. We should evaluate our Sunday School ministry because it works. A properly conducted evaluation is designed to help you determine the answers to these questions...

Where has our Sunday School ministry been in the past?

How is our Sunday School ministry organized?

What are its strengths and weaknesses?

How effective is the current Sunday School Ministry?

How are workers being trained?

Where is our Sunday School Ministry going?

A well done evaluation will make your Sunday School Ministry a more effective tool in fulfilling the Great Commission. However, we should also keep in mind that while evaluation is important, there is one thing that is the most important. That is, It's all about Jesus. Each question above should be asked in light of how it exalts Jesus Christ. It doesn't matter where your Sunday School has been, or where it's going if Jesus isn't the one leading. It makes no difference how it is organized unless Christ is not seen and exalted in every aspect of it. It doesn't matter how effective it is in terms of bringing people into the church walls, if it is not bringing people into heaven's kingdom. It doesn't matter how well they are trained, if that training does not teach them that Christ is first in all things, and it is He who should be on everyone's tongue. It's not about you, your Church's name, your Ministry, or keeping some "headquarters" happy. It's about Jesus... It's about His Ministry... and it's about His kingdom.

If one keeps these things in mind while evaluating where your Sunday School Ministry is at, you will soon find that it is Christ Jesus who does the blessing and moves you forward as He sees fit.



# Sunday School Ministry

## Lesson Six

Today we are going to address the issue of "Organization". Good organization is vital to effectiveness. Understanding the benefits of effective organization is essential to developing and implementing a Sunday School program...or any ministry, work, or group requiring one person or more. If we are to be effective in communicating the Word of God in the Sunday School, we must go about our task in a fitting and orderly way (1 Cor. 14:40)

Following are some benefits acquired for having an effective and organized ministry.

First, being organized will help in developing teamwork. In a successful sports team, all players must sacrifice their own desires for personal achievement and cooperate with their teammates. Star players alone cannot win a game. All members must perform their specific roles in each play. It is no different in ministry. Each person must work as a team, and being well organized will go a long way in achieving that goal.

Secondly good organization helps to identify responsibility. Unorganized Sunday Schools are usually ineffective. And again, I must add that these principles apply to any work where one or more people are involved. The more involved, the more necessary organization is. Organization makes it possible to clearly define responsibility, assign tasks, and indicate who is responsible for what, and to whom.

Thirdly, being organized in your ministry helps to clarify God's overall purpose for the work you are doing. Disciplined workers learn to organize their efforts, in love, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until it reaches unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature. (Eph. 4:12,13)

Next, good organization will help to focus the aims of teaching and learning. Organization helps to give aim, form, and drive to building an effective curriculum. Sunday School leaders must know what they believe. They must have evangelistic fervor and spiritual depth. Effective teachers and leaders know how to relate current issues to what the Bible says as well.

And then, being well organized helps to enlist all members talents. The Church must be organized to develop servants who serve. A Church that recognizes each members talents and equips them to utilize those talents properly will reap the rewards. Spiritual maturity makes a valuable impact on the community and on the Churchs ministry. The

well organized Sunday School ministry can discover leaders, disciple students, and deepen the church's spiritual life.

And lastly, proper organization will encourage community outreach. As talents are recognized, developed, utilized and in turn, passed on to others, the end result will be a desire to witness and share with others outside the Church. This evangelistic outreach will then bring others into the Sunday School and the whole process of reproducing our selves starts all over.

Remember as we close that care must always be taken to insure everything is done for the glory of Jesus Christ, and that HE remains the central focus. Many times when discussing matters such as this, we have a tendency to become "religious" or "legalistic" in our ministry, and forget to walk in the Spirit. Always stay flexible enough that Holy Spirit can direct each step, and always remember what we are striving for....Bringing the lost to Christ, and edifying the body of Christ through evangelism and education.

# **Sunday School Ministry**

## Test Six

(1) List six achievements that can be accomplished through good organization.

(2) Care must always be taken to insure everything is done...?

# Sunday School Ministry

## Lesson Seven

In any properly functioning work, whether it be your Job, your sport or your Sunday School ministry, it is important to work together as a team. Where you see failure, it will almost always be from a situation where the different aspects of the specific work were trying to operate on their own.

Paul wrote, under the inspiration of Holy Spirit, “For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.  
(Romans 12:4,5)

These verses, as well as many others, illustrate how important each person is in the ministry. We are all part of the body of Christ (if you have truly been born again), but we do not all have the same function. Which is more important? The Pastor, the Superintendent? The secretary? The Janitor? The greeter? Or the lady in the kitchen cooking up something for everyone to eat? The truth is, every single person involved in the work of the Lord is just as important as the next person. Each person should do what they do for the glory of God (1Co\_10:31 )

As a whole, this is true, but each individual ministry within the church falls under this same principle.... The Sunday School ministry as well. A well organized Sunday School, working together as a team, working together with the rest of the Church ministries, working with other like minded Children of God, is a force to be reckoned with.

Take a moment to look up these verses regarding teamwork.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 - Two [are] better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

Proverbs 27:17 - Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.

1 Corinthians 12:20-25 - But now [are they] many members, yet but one body.

Philippians 2:1-30 - If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

Ephesians 4:16 - From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.

1 Corinthians 1:10 - Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and [that] there be no divisions among you; but [that] ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Romans 15:5-6 - Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:

1 Peter 4:10 - As every man hath received the gift, [even so] minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

Hebrews 10:24-25 - And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

Genesis 2:18 - And the LORD God said, [It is] not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

Ephesians 4:11-12 - And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;

Psalms 133:1 - (A Song of degrees of David.) Behold, how good and how pleasant [it is] for brethren to dwell together in unity!



# Sunday School Ministry

## Lesson Eight

A proven method for building effective Sunday Schools lies in a well planned, carefully executed, long range equipping and training program. No Sunday school can truly fulfill its purpose unless it has effective staff members and productive Students. Equipping leaders and teachers for service and training them in sound biblical principles will accomplish much.

Why should we equip and train our Church workers, and what is the difference? There are six points I want to look at in this lesson

Equipping concentrates on the person, whereas training concentrates on the task. Equipping is far more concerned with developing the person that the person does. Equipping therefore, will assist individuals in discovering who they are, what their spiritual gifts are and what God's plan is for them. Understanding this, helps the leaders place people where they are the most useful for God's purpose, and ultimately where they are the happiest.

Equipping develops the individuals potential, whereas training develops proficiency. Task proficiency is the goal of training while equipping is far more concerned with what the individual is called to do for Christ. As you can probably see by now, both aspects of building an effective Sunday School are necessary. It does not good to equip a person, if they have no idea how to utilize this potential, but at the same time, it does no good to train a person, and then fail to equip them to do what they are trained to do.

Equipping teaches problem solving whereas training teaches technique. Equipping is able to empower the believer to resolve issues, adapt techniques and modify approaches that go far beyond the current experience and ministry task. Equipping encourages learning transfer. In other words, training gives the worker the knowledge needed for the task at hand, but a trained and equipped worker can take that knowledge and transfer it to task beyond what they are currently doing.

Equipping initiates new ministry, whereas training generally maintains existing ministry. Individually developed believers are more open and responsive to the Spirits leading to fresh new Challenges in their world.

These distinctions between equipping and training are not intended in any way to discredit training at the expense of equipping. Rather it is to demonstrate that the Church needs both equipping and training.

A couple other points to think about is “when” to equip your workers and “how” do you

do it? The answer to these questions however is not that simple. Many external factors will go into answering them, and each ministry will have a different answer. Some ministries do ongoing regular training...maybe weekly, monthly, or semi-annually. Others may find taking one week out of the year works best for them.

Factors such as, the size of the ministry, the type of ministry, and the number of workers involved will affect the “when” and “how” as well. The key to success is prayer, dedication, and flexibility. A spirit filled leader will be sensitive to all the different factors involved, and will prayerfully adjust training methods and times as needed.

# **Sunday School Ministry**

## Test Eight

(1) What is the difference between Equipping and Teaching?

(2) What are some factors involved in deciding "when" and "how" to do training?

# Sunday School Ministry

## Lesson Nine

As we start to wind down our study regarding Sunday School Ministries, it would do us well to take a moment and look at a couple areas that normally get overlooked. The first is in regards to different resources available to those in charge of Sunday Schools.

For those churches that accept the Bible as the center of the curriculum in their educational programs, all goals, materials and activities must be built on the Word of God. It has been well said by many that there are many ways to teach and preach the Gospel, but there is only one Gospel. The point here is that whether you create all your own material, or you buy it from other sources, it is important that it stays true to the Word of God. You may decide to use mostly printed material, use visual aids, sketch board, felt board, Gospel tricks, progressive art stories, or any other number of ways to teach the Scripture...and all of them, done right, can be very effective. BUT, the thing to remember is, regardless of “how” you teach the Gospel, the single most important thing to remember is, “there is only one Gospel, and that alone is “what” we teach”.

Another thing to remember is that whatever curriculum you choose to use, it must embrace the home, church, school, community, vocations, recreation, and all other aspects of your students lives. Remember in previous lessons we discussed that the early Sunday School was not completely focused on Bible teaching. The early Sunday Schools focused on feeding the children, making sure they were clean, feed, safe, and equipped for life in general. They taught the children how to read, how to take care of themselves, and how to conduct themselves. Today, the Sunday School focuses primarily on Religious matters. However, I believe a properly balanced Sunday School can do both. Teaching the students proper Biblical Doctrines is essential. However, we can also teach them how to dress in a modest manner...How to talk in a Christ honoring way... and how to behave in a biblical way. A well balance Sunday School will incorporate life lessons that apply to the students daily lives, as well as Scriptural Doctrine, and Spiritual applications all at the same time.

Since adults comprise a wider and more diverse age group than ever before, special attention must be given to adult Christian education. Courses designed for men and women should relate the Scriptures to the specific problems of adult stages and their corresponding social issues. Some specialty areas to keep in mind when designing a well rounded curriculum might be leadership training, Bible study leader, role modeling as well as many others.

In looking for resources for your Sunday School ministry, one must keep in mind what

the needs and purposes of the congregation are now, and what they may be in the future. Are you planning outreach ministries? Are you going to need more diverse material? Is the age disparity changing? Are you going to need more classes? These and many more questions should be looked at frequently.

Of course, looking at your limitations is also very important. If you only have two classrooms, it may not be a wise move at the moment to try and start a new class. Having only a few people to lead different ministries could also become a hindrance. It is important to see where God has you, and what He has given you to work with in deciding what ministries to focus on. The same is true in planning and acquiring resources for your Sunday School. What can be done, given your resources, is a very good guide in what to plan.

And finally, after looking at where you are, and where you see your Sunday School ministry going, the next step is to find the resources you need. In today's electronic world, it is pretty easy to find almost anything you may need to conduct your ministry the way God has lead you to do it. If your on a budget, many things can be made in house with very little capital at all. Printing your own material is very easy as well. Most material online can be reproduced for educational purposes, as long as you don't claim it as your own material, or charge anything for it. Always give credit where credit is do. With a laptop and a projector, the sky is the limit as to what type of visual lessons you can do. With children, being creative is always fun. They will let you know if you bombed. Adults are more forgiving. Try different things to see what your students respond to. Ask what they would like and how they feel they learn the best. The key when looking at Ministry resources is diversity. Don't get stuck in a rut.... Don't put God in a box. Make things exciting and new.



# Sunday School Ministry

## Lesson Ten

The Sunday School ministry target is to fulfill Christ's Great Commission of making disciples. Recent studies in the field of Christian education have suggested several worthy standards that need to be addressed if the Sunday School is to keep on target and remain in the forefront of church educational ministry.

Recruit staff properly  
Follow up with students  
Train every teacher  
establish and use church resources  
accept change as inevitable

As we have learned in previous lessons, the Sunday School program has seen its share of ups and downs. During the times that it was on a downward path, neglect in one or more of the areas mentioned above was most likely the reason. Although a whole lesson all of its own could be given for each of these topics, for our lesson today, I am just going to briefly introduce the subject. A student who is interested in starting or running a successful Sunday School Ministry can follow through with each subject on their own, and customize it as their needs and resources allow.

Recruit staff properly.... Most churches recruit staff with a “any warm body will do” attitude. However, just as having the proper people placed in the proper ministry will have a positive affect on your Church, so will having the wrong person in a position will have a negative affect. Prayerfully watching your congregation and noting those whose life exhibits the hand of God on them is the place to start looking. Leaders must set examples, and only those who have the spirit of God in them can set a godly example.

Follow up with Students... Sunday School leaders need to develop and implement procedures for following up visitors and absentees. Carrying out such a program may require the help of everyone involved. Follow up should also involve good record keeping procedures and holding everyone accountable. Whenever possible, follow up should be conducted by a husband and wife team, and records of who was visited, when, and for how long should be kept. It is also good to remember that follow up should include not only encouraging the person to “come again”, but also to seek if there is any way to be a blessing, or if there is anything you can pray with them about, and most assuredly, to seek confirmation regarding salvation

Training every teacher... We discussed training in a previous lesson, so we won't revisit it here.

Establish and use church resources....Having a resource room is always helpful. In this room all kinds of things that can help a Sunday School teacher do their ministry better can be put. Arts and craft supplies, copy and printing supplies, media supplies, teaching books, tracts, pamphlets and so much more should be there. If your teacher needs it, it should be there.

Accept Change...Again, as we mentioned before, there are many ways to preach and teach the Gospel, but there is only one Gospel. Change is inevitable. It never hurts to change things up some. BUT, always remember that God's Word does not change. Godly morals and standards do not change. Never compromise the Word of God, or biblical principles. But, how you present them can change. Today's youth can't be reached very well using 1960's methods.

And then finally, lets take a moment to look at the future and what it may look like so we can better prepare today. Years ago, Wednesdays nights and Sundays were off limits for outside influences. Public Schools did not schedule activities during these times because they were Church activity times. But not today. Sunday School's have to compete with public Schools for children's time. They have to compete with businesses for adult ministries. And, in the future, it is going to be even harder. Sunday Schools will need to look at this conflict of interest and may have to establish different times to meet.

Erosion of traditional values will also play a part in future ministries. Polls reflect that fewer people in society feel organized religion is an important part in their lives. These attitudes show that the Sunday School is still needed and must find ways to reach these people. Decline in literacy, increase in educational options, technology, and an increasingly mobile society are other factors that are changing rapidly and must be looked at and addressed if the Sunday School is going to continue reaching the lost with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Many people have moved away from traditional religious services and have gone back to home style services. Along with this move, is finding a way to reach all ages in these smaller type settings. Prayer, fasting, and being flexible is the only way we are going to continue forward. May God guide and bless as you continue in His work.

# **Sunday School Ministry**

## Test Ten

(1) What are several worthy standards that need to be addressed if the Sunday School is to keep on target and remain in the forefront of church educational ministry?

(2) What are several issues the Sunday School Ministry will have to face looking forward into the future?