

BASIC ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL MINISTRY

Bill Alphin, March 23, 2006

HOW TO ASSIMILATE A GUEST WHO ATTENDS THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

- ♦ If guests are entering into the church fellowship by way of the Sunday School then those who invited them or know them should take responsibility for getting them to the right place to be properly introduced and assimilated. This could be in a welcome center or an adult class or department.
- ♦ It is important that when they are introduced and information about them and their family (if applicable) is obtained on the first visit. The class or department outreach leader or secretary can assist with gathering the information.
- ♦ Guests should be contacted within thirty-six hours of the first visit (Savage). This contact is coordinated by the class outreach coordinator.
- ♦ Follow-up contacts are coordinated by the class outreach coordinator but the outreach coordinator should enlist the help of others.
- ♦ Contact assignments should be given out during the fellowship time before class or following the class period. Assignments can also be made over the telephone.
- ♦ The next Sunday the class outreach leader needs to get a report and collect information from the person who made the contact the prior week. That information can help those who make future contacts.
- ♦ Continue the cycle. It sometimes takes many contacts to get people to begin attending on a regular basis. Contacts can include telephone calls, letters, notes, postcards, personal visits and E-mail.

IF A GUEST ATTENDS THE WORSHIP SERVICE

- ♦ **STEP ONE: Collect information about guests during the worship hour**

This information should include name, address, phone number, information on family, prayer and other special interest or needs and desire for contact. (It is helpful if all of the congregation register each Sunday morning. This encourages guests to provide information since they want to fit in and everyone is doing the same thing at the same time. This requires reeducation of the congregation.)

It may not be practical to get complete information during the worship service. If this is the case, it becomes the responsibility of the ushers to meet the guest and, before or after the service, obtain the needed information through a casual interview.

Some churches provide a "meet the pastor" reception following the worship service. This reception should be attended by the guest and key leaders from the Sunday School. It is an opportunity to make initial contact by the Sunday School and to obtain more complete information through a conversational interview.

- ♦ **STEP TWO: Make contact with the attendees Sunday afternoon.**

A **DOOR STEP VISIT** on Sunday afternoon is most effective. This can be handled by a deacon, usher, church staff person or a Sunday School member. The purpose is to let guests know that the church cares and wants to be of help. A door step visit is just that. Conversation should go something like this, "We are glad you came. Here are some information resources that might be helpful. We look forward to seeing you again next Sunday." Then the visitor departs. No appointment is required.

- ♦ **STEP THREE: Pass the information about the guest to the Sunday School outreach leaders for follow-up.**

Continue to follow up with a guest until they become regular attendees in Sunday School. Use good judgment when it comes to visits to the home of guests. Once or twice a month may be appropriate, followed by a note, e-mail or a phone call. Always make an appointment before going to a home for a visit.

HELPING ATTENDEES MAKE NEW FRIENDS IN THE ADULT CLASS

- ♦ Provide opportunities for fellowship. Sunday Morning coffee time before the Bible study is an excellent forum for developing friendships.
- ♦ Provide once a quarter a class fellowship activity/outing. This might be a picnic, a dinner, bowling party, or any activity that gets people together in a relaxed and fun environment where there is opportunity to talk.
- ♦ Invite the new attendee to join the class as soon as there is opportunity, preferably on the first visit.
- ♦ Connect the new attendee with a class care group where there will be constant monitoring of attendance and needs.
- ♦ Make new Sunday School members aware of ministry opportunities in the life of the congregation.
- ♦ Provide a time for announcements about discipleship development or missions opportunities.
- ♦ Encourage new members to become involved in learning beyond the Sunday morning experience.
- ♦ Encourage those who want a deeper faith in God or a better understanding of the Bible study to participate in an appropriate small group where there is accountability and encouragement from small group members and leaders. These groups would meet at times other than Sunday morning.

PROVIDING CARE MINISTRY THROUGH THE ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS

Organize adult class members and attendees into care groups. Each group should not have more than four to seven adults or couples assigned to each care group.

Enlist care group leaders to keep up with the people who are assigned to their group. Their responsibilities include contacts when people are absent, telephone calls to share information of future events, and sharing ministry needs with other leaders as appropriate.

Ministry needs discovered through the care group leaders of the adult class should respond to meet those needs. If the needs go beyond the ability of the class, church leaders need to be made aware of the needs yet guarding personal privacy.

Provide a prayer time on Sunday morning. Encourage members to pray for class members during the week as a part of their quiet time with God. Use Sunday School resources to provide guidance.

A SAMPLE SUNDAY MORNING ADULT BIBLE STUDY/SUNDAY SCHOOL SCHEDULE

- 9:45 a.m. -- Fellowship time as people arrive. Provide refreshments and conversation.
During this time the outreach leader can share information about guests and make contact with those who have or will make contact with guests and visitors.
- 10:00 a.m. -- Open with prayer and begin the Bible Study for that week.
- 10:30 a.m. -- Close the Bible study and ask for prayer concerns and praises.
- 10:40 a.m. -- Close with prayer.
(If time allows continue to fellowship. This is a good time for the class outreach leader to make additional visitation/contact assignments.)

ADULT CLASS LEADERS MINISTRY (JOB) DESCRIPTIONS:

Teacher

The teacher should serve as the class administrator and Bible study leader. In many ways one might think of the teacher as the ‘pastor’ of the class. The teacher will be the person responsible for assuring the proper enlistment and training of class leaders. The teacher should take the lead in planning with class leaders the ministry of the adult Sunday School class. The input from members should be encouraged. Finally, the teacher should be a model of Christian conduct and leadership. This will mean the teacher sets the example for everyone in the class. (Much like a pastor)

Class Outreach Coordinator (Class Outreach Leader) – Formerly the Class President

This person is responsible for facilitating the adult Sunday School class in outreach and cultivation of visitors, guests and prospects. This leader should keep an up-to-date class prospect file that is used in the class for the purpose of keeping up with contacts made to prospects by class members. An excellent resource: *Sunday School Visitation Assignment Packet and Card* (Lifeway Christian Stores CGG # 10410-0767300068). It should be noted that this leader should not do all the contacting and visitation for the class. The role of the Outreach Leader/Coordinator is to make sure it happens through assignments and follow-up with class members who make contacts.

Class Care Leader (One for 4-7 members and prospects)

Each adult Sunday School class should have one person for every 4-7 class members and prospects who will keep up with these assigned 4-7 persons. Keeping up includes contacting them when they are absent, keeping them up to date on class functions and serving as the first contact for ministry when needs are discovered. Care leaders should cultivate new members and guests with contacts that encourage class involvement. Another way of thinking about the role of the Care Leader is to think of the role of deacons who assist the pastor in pastoral care ministries.

The Class Fellowship Coordinator

This leader coordinates class fellowship both on Sunday morning and at other times. This includes leading the planning and organization of the Sunday morning fellowship time before the Bible study, class social events and other assimilation activities that help members and prospects feel connected to the class and each other. The Fellowship Coordinator’s role in the class is to lead in providing activities that create a sense of fun, togetherness and “family” within the class. Beyond the Sunday morning fellowship time, there should be a class social/ministry event about every three months.

The Secretary

This leader is responsible to the teacher and the Sunday School secretary for compiling and reporting class membership records. For classes with college students or members of the military who are away the secretaries can take the lead coordinating communication. This can be written notes, care packages and information about church activities and news.

DISCOVER AND ENLIST NEW LEADERS

New leadership may be found among those not presently serving, new class members and members who show potential as a leader. Examine Sunday School and church roles. Who attends on a regular basis but is uninvolved as a church leader? Brainstorm with current leaders to compile a list of names of potential new leaders

For the first enlistment, contact and set up an appointment to come to the home. During the enlistment visit share the challenge and importance of the ministry being considered. Tell the potential leader why they are being considered and what is expected if the ministry position is accepted. Share resources available. Set an appointment for follow-up.

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