

## Doing Sunday School Right

**PREPARATION: (NOTE THAT LEADER GUIDANCE IS CAPITALIZED AND IN BOLD FACE PRINT IN THE PREPARATION AND IN THE CONTENT.) (1) COPY THE STATEMENTS ABOUT SUNDAY SCHOOL FROM SUNDAY SCHOOL LEADERS. (SEE ATTACHMENT.) CUT THEM APART TO BE GIVEN TO PARTICIPANTS TO BE READ. (2) MAKE A BANNER WITH THE QUESTION, “WHY DO SUNDAY SCHOOLS NOT GROW?”. (SEE ATTACHMENT.) (3) GET MASKING TAPE AND WHITEBOARD MARKERS OR CHALK. (4) DUPLICATE COPIES OF THE STATEMENTS ON “HOW TO HELP A SUNDAY SCHOOL GROW.” (SEE ATTACHMENT.) (5) MAKE THE 14 POSTERETTES RELATED TO “PRINCIPLES OF SUNDAY SCHOOL.” (6) GET A COPY OF *ESSENTIALS FOR EQUIPPING AND HOW-TO SUNDAY SCHOOL GUIDE*.**

### I. Introduction

- A. Voice a prayer of thanksgiving for the gift of God’s Word.
- B. Introduce yourself and ask each participant to introduce himself or herself by giving name and what responsibility he or she has in the church.

#### C. Defining Sunday School

**(ASK – WHAT IS THE SUNDAY SCHOOL TO THE AVERAGE PERSON? THEN ASK FOR AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT REGARDING EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS.)**

##### 1. Statements:

- a. It is an independent body within the church.
- b. It is the teaching service of the church.
- c. It is the primary ministry to children.
- d. It is the primary agency for fellowship and prayer.
- e. It is not of importance to the existence of the church.

(These are all misconceptions or half truths.)

##### 2. Statements from leaders

**(GIVE VARIOUS STATEMENTS TO INDIVIDUALS THAT SUNDAY SCHOOL LEADERS HAVE SAID. (SEE ATTACHMENTS.) ASK EACH ONE TO READ THE STATEMENT. ASK PARTICIPANTS HOW SHE OR HE WOULD DEFINE THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.)**

##### 3. Lack of growth

**(READ THE FOLLOWING AND ASK FOR IDEAS AS TO WHY THIS IS TRUE: AN AMAZING FACT: 90% OF 40,000 SBC CHURCHES HAVE SUNDAY SUNDAY, BUT ONLY 30% OF SBC CHURCHES ARE GROWING.)**

D. Why do Sunday Schools not grow?

**(ADHERE THE BANNER, “Why do Sunday Schools not grow?”, TO THE WALL. WRITE KEY WORDS ON THE CHALKBOARD OR WHITEBOARD AS YOU EXPLAIN THE REASONS.)**

1. Lack of understanding about the purpose of Sunday School.
2. Lost vision for the total work of the Sunday School.
3. Lack of emphasis on Sunday School.
  - a. Ignorance of Sunday School Principles.
  - b. Perception that Sunday School is relatively unimportant.
  - c. Perception that Sunday School is the job of the Minister of Education.
4. Lax attitude toward Sunday School’s component parts.
  - a. Sunday School Planning Team.
  - b. Weekly Leadership Meeting.
  - c. Ongoing Leadership Training.
  - d. Enrollment.
  - e. Creating New Units.
  - f. Annual Promotion.
  - g. Organized Class Structure.
5. Laziness

E. Barriers to Sunday School Growth

**(CALL FOR SOMEONE TO DEFINE THE WORD “BARRIER.” READ THE FOLLOWING AND COMMENT ON EACH ONE.)**

1. Misunderstanding of its mission -- Missing the true driving force of why the Sunday School exists and the understanding that the actions planned for the Sunday School are designed to contribute toward the accomplishing of its mission.
2. Infrastructure -- The failure as a Sunday School to continue to enlarge the infrastructure (organization, units, leadership, space, etc.) to support the enlarged membership and to enable continued growth.
3. Lack of leadership -- The continuing development of leadership that are not only able to follow through with plans, but are able to take initiative developing their area of responsibility.

4. Uninformed membership -- The membership does not have a sense of the mission and direction of the Sunday School and the importance of their role in the accomplishing of the mission.
5. Lack of spiritual power -- The leadership of the Sunday School are not working under a sense of the power and direction of the Holy Spirit, but under their own strength and direction.

## II. How to Help Your Sunday School Grow

**(READ AND COMMENT ON EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS. CALL ON VOLUNTEERS TO COMMENT ALSO. GIVE EACH PERSON A SHEET WITH THE STATEMENTS ON THEM. (SEE ATTACHMENT.) ASK PARTICIPANTS TO WRITE KEY WORDS AS TO WAYS THEY CAN DO EACH THING.)**

- A. Be on top of statistics and use them to help your church members understand your growth patterns.
- B. Develop an understanding of what you really mean by “growth” - - transfer (from another church), biological, conversion
- C. Develop a strong sense of mission for your Sunday School and church.
- D. Plan well and have well-developed priorities, goals, and action plans.
- E. Continually re-emphasize the mission to the unreached.
- F. Assimilation is a key to Sunday School growth
  1. Develop plans to effectively, intentionally assimilate new members.
  2. Keep all new members informed about various opportunities to participate in the life of their Sunday School class and the church.
  3. Help existing members to become aware of the background and experience brought by new members.
  4. Put in place new member orientation and potential leader training.
  5. Have well organized adult classes that immediately involve new members.
- G. Set Goals
  1. Always relate goals to the mission of the Sunday School and priorities.
  2. Present the “human picture” in the accomplishment of goals.
  3. Continually report on the progress of goals and the impact their accomplishment on the Sunday School and church.
- H. Create New Units

1. Keep the focus on the mission of the Sunday School.
2. Remember that people have formed close caring relationships and it is difficult to give them up.
3. It takes time to convince people of the value of new units.
4. Focus on the successes.
5. Keep at the process.
6. Practice the Principles for Starting New Units
  - a. Create a climate for new units.
  - b. Win the confidence of leaders of existing units before beginning new units from them.
  - c. Do not divide existing classes and departments. Start new ones.
  - d. Do not use “red flag” words like *divide* or *split*.
  - e. Provide space for new units.
  - f. Continually train additional leaders.

#### I. Training

1. Pastor, staff, and leadership demonstrate a commitment to training.
2. Clearly communicate how training makes a difference in the work of individuals and the ministry of the church.
3. Discuss the importance of training with workers individually.
4. Ask for individual commitments to the task God has given them and to equipping themselves.
5. Be aware of the individual training needs of leaders.
6. Ask individuals to share testimonies of the value of training to them.
7. Make training purposeful and of high quality.
8. Recognize the training down by leaders.

#### J. Concentrate on Enrollment

1. Train members and leaders on the importance of enrollment.
2. Do not emphasize percentages.
3. Celebrate new members enrolled.
4. Control the drop process.
5. Report on the enrollment progress
  - a. Hold up examples of classes that are enrolling new people.
  - b. Have Sunday School members stand with new members when they join.
  - c. Show statistically what happens when new people are enrolled.

#### K. Getting Our S.S. Headed In The Right Direction

1. Recognize the Builder of the Sunday School.  
(God: Matthew 16:18)
2. Regain a sense of purpose for the Sunday School.  
(It's a strategy for fulfilling the Great Commission.)
3. Recommit to the work of Sunday School.  
(It is a hard, seven-days-a-week work.)

### III. Realize the Principles of Sunday School.

**(ADHERE THE 14 SMALL POSTERETTES TO THE WALL. REFER TO EACH ONE AS YOU GUIDE A DISCUSSION ON EACH TOPIC. DEFINE EACH PRINCIPLE. )**

- A. **Enrollment** is an important principle of Sunday School work.
  1. As enrollment goes, so goes your Sunday School.
  2. Enrollment affects Sunday School attendance, units, workers, offerings, baptisms, and worship attendance.
  3. Open enrollment means we can enroll persons in Sunday School anywhere and at any time as long as they agree to be enrolled.
  4. The key to enrollment is that it is the opportunity for ministry to begin.
  5. Enrollment controls: Attendance, Ministry, Offerings, and Baptisms
  6. How do we emphasize enrollment?
    - a. Train members and leaders on the importance of enrollment.
    - b. Train how to enroll -- on Sunday and during the week.
    - c. Enroll anytime, anywhere.
    - d. Do not emphasize percentages.
    - e. Celebrate new members enrolled.
    - f. Control the drop process.
    - g. Report on the enrollment progress.
  7. Ways to enroll
    - a. Carry enrollment cards and use them when contacting prospects
    - b. Enroll nonmembers when they attend Bible study classes
    - c. Enroll persons during worship services
    - d. Enroll persons during visitation
    - e. Enroll persons participating in special church events
  8. When enrolling someone using open enrollment you must follow up with those persons immediately. The follow-up visit must include the following:
    - a. Deliver Bible study materials.
    - b. Provide information about the class such as

starting time, location, parking information, appropriate dress, and so forth.

c. Volunteer to provide transportation if necessary.

d. Volunteer to sit with the new member in Sunday School and in the worship service.

e. If the person is joining the church, then volunteer to stand with him or her when presented to the congregation.

9. Assimilate enrollees in the Sunday morning Bible study by

a. Using get-acquainted activities.

b. Using name tags.

c. Using words of encouragement and affirmation.

d. Celebrating special occasions.

e. Inviting them to social events.

f. Giving them newsletters and printed information.

**B. *Reaching prospects*** is an important principle of Sunday School work.

1. If your Sunday School is going to effectively and efficiently reach people you must have prospects.

2. One prospect should be cultivated for every member on roll.

3. A prospect is defined as anyone who is not attending Sunday School.

4. How do you find prospects?

a. Conduct surveys – door-to-door, telephone, etc.

b. Look at VBS and adult VBS enrollment

c. Check with those doing church ministries

d. Ask about invitees to class and department activities

e. Check on newcomers to the church and the community

f. Look within your own membership.

g. Lead members to share the names of lost and unchurched neighbors, friends, and business associates.

**C. *Creating new units*** (Sunday School classes) is an important principle of Sunday School work.

1. A church must strive constantly to create new units.

2. There should be one class for every 20 people enrolled.

3. Once a Bible study class has been established, it reaches its maximum size in 12 to 18 months. (The danger is that the class could become closed rather than open.)

4. The Bible study units *continually* must be:

a. repositioning themselves for GROWTH,

b. sending out WORKERS,

- c. accommodating NEW PEOPLE who are being discovered,
  - d. MINISTERING to members, and
  - e. EVANGELIZING unreached persons.
5. Be very cautious when any of the following occurs:
    - a. Class members become too attached to the teacher.
    - b. Class members become too attached to the room.
    - c. Class members become too attached to each other.
    - d. A class stops growing.
    - e. A class keeps members instead of sending members out to work.
    - f. New units keep the growth alive!
  6. Opportunities for starting new classes
    - a. Start new classes when organization opportunities provide.
    - b. Start new classes for special ministry opportunities--premarriage, newly wed, special education, etc.
    - c. Start off site classes.
    - d. Start new classes for unreached groups.
    - e. Pastor's class.

D. **Enlisting, training, and using workers** is an important principle of Sunday School work.

1. There should be one worker for every 5 members.
2. The best way to find new workers is to cultivate them.
3. Who are the workers?
  - Pastor, General Sunday School leaders, division and department directors, outreach directors, outreach leaders, teachers, care group leaders, and FAITH team members.
4. How do get workers?
  - a. Train the enlisters.
  - b. Enlist workers by the person to whom they are responsible.
  - c. Use the nominating committee serve as a clearing house.
  - d. Keep at the task until the complete organization is staffed.
  - e. Provide potential leader training.
  - f. Equip workers prior to service.

E. **Space** is an important principle of Sunday School work.

1. There should be one space for every unit.
2. You will need a meeting space for each Bible study unit. (Remember you may have units off-site such as telephone class, students away class, nursing home classes, classes meeting in homes.)

3. Every church has three types of space needs:
    - a. Parking
    - b. Worship
    - c. Education
  4. If and when you fill up any of these spaces, then you will stop growth from occurring.
  5. If any spaces are at 80% capacity, then consider each space to be full.
  6. Education space can often be uncovered right where you are.
    - a. Available space
    - b. Adjusted space
    - c. Adaptable space
    - d. Adjacent space
  7. How do you find space?
    - a. Analyze space. Do a space walk.
    - b. Adjust space assignments.
    - c. Make additional space.
    - d. Multiple use of space.
    - e. Use Adjacent space.
    - f. Plan ahead when building or rearranging
- F. **Ministry contact** is an important principle of Sunday School work.
1. There should be one contact for every member each week.
  2. The Sunday School enrollment represents the persons that we want to minister to each week.
  3. The Sunday School roll is not merely a list of persons who should attend Sunday School each week, but a *target* for weekly ministry opportunities.
  4. The class must be organized for such ministry to happen.
  5. Develop a strong, functioning outreach organization.
  6. How can you make ministry contacts work?
    - a. Enlist an outreach-evangelism director.
    - b. Enlist department outreach-evangelism leaders
    - c. Enlist class outreach-evangelism leaders to be responsible for outreach for each unit.
- G. **Workers in training** is an important principle of Sunday School work.
1. Every worker needs to participate in some kind of leadership training each year.
  2. Workers can be trained by
    - a. attending classes

- b. reading material
- c. viewing films and tapes
- d. listening to audio tapes
- e. observing experienced leaders
- f. working alongside experienced leaders
- g. using technology

H. ***Sunday School Leadership Team Meetings*** is an important principle of Sunday School work.

1. Seventy-five per cent of workers should be planning together each week.
2. The meeting is about people and how we seek to prepare to meet the needs of people who are targeted by our class or department.
3. The meeting should
  - a. focus on relationships
  - b. focus on Bible study
  - c. focus on the Sunday School's mission

I. ***Attendance*** is an important principle of Sunday School work.

1. If attendance is below 40 percent there is probably a need for stronger ministry through Sunday School.
2. If the attendance is above 60 percent, there likely have been people who have been dropped from the roll because of chronic absenteeism.
3. Use extreme caution in removing people from the Sunday School roll. ( Remember, the roll is our way of keeping up with people for ministry.)
4. There are three reasons to remove someone from the roll.
  - a. They have united with another church.
  - b. They have moved out of the area.
  - c. They are dead.
5. Our goal is *not* to get people to attend Sunday School, it is to *minister* to them and raise them to be obedient to the commands of Christ.
6. Attendance follows good ministry.
7. Meeting people's needs is vital.
8. People will absent themselves when their needs are not met.
9. Attendance will average between 40-60% of enrollment. Increase the enrollment and the average attendance potential increases.
10. Weekly contacts: Attendance will increase

based on the increase in number and types of contacts made.

11. Ratio of workers to members: Attendance is impacted by increasing the number of workers and decreasing the ratio of workers to members.

12. Number of units: Attendance is increased by starting and strengthening new units which target unreached groups.

13. Sunday School attendance can be projected based on the enrollment.

J. **Persons in discipleship** is an important principle of Sunday School work.

1. Fifty per cent of Sunday School membership should be enrolled in discipleship training.

2. The purpose of discipleship groups is to build believers.

3. These are closed groups designed for Christians for the purpose of focusing on application of God's Word.

4. At least one-half of the Sunday School enrollment should be enrolled in discipleship training.

K. **Worship attendance** is an important principle of Sunday School work.

1. Worship attendance should be within 10% of your Sunday School attendance.

2. People should be enrolled from the worship service.

L. **Offerings** is an important principle of Sunday School work.

1. The projected Sunday School attendance multiplied by the per capita giving number will determine future offerings.

2. Example: 200 average attendance x \$20 per capita giving = \$4000 weekly receipts.

M. **FAITH Teams** is an important principle of Sunday School work.

1. There should be at least one FAITH Team for every Sunday School unit.

2. FAITH teams emphasize evangelism.

N. **Baptisms** is an important principle of Sunday School work.

1. There should be an increase in baptisms from the previous year.

2. Baptisms are projected by the increase in Sunday School enrollment.

3. One-half of the net enrollment gain usually will be lost persons. One-half of those persons will be baptized and/or assimilated into the church within one year.

#### IV. Conclusion

A. Reference additional books that will be of help to those wanting to do Sunday School right.

1. *Essentials for Excellence*

2. *How-to Sunday School Guide*

B. Give a quick summary of the basic points in this presentation.

C. Conclude with a prayer that God will use all that has been learned in this session to make our churches stronger through strong Sunday Schools.

**Special Note:**

**This teaching plan was written by Mic Morrow**

**For adult Sunday School specialist**

**For the**

**Baptist General Association of Virginia.**

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The Sunday School is the chief and almost only hope for church growth.”  
E.Y. Mullins, 1902

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Sunday School work is church work.” Arthur Flake, 1922

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“Sunday Schools in Baptist churches today live and move and have their being in the churches. They are in the churches, of the churches, and for the churches.” Arthur Flake, 1930

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“Sunday School provides the church with its greatest field and greatest force for evangelism.” J.N. Barnette, 1937

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“The foundational work of Sunday School is teaching the biblical revelation, leading a church to reach the increasing multitudes of unreached, and in leading the church members regularly and consistently to worship, witness, learn, and minister as befits good soldiers of the Lord Jesus Christ.”  
A.V. Washburn, 1966

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“A Sunday School can be thought of as a church reaching people and enrolling them in Bible study, as a church teaching the Word of God and witnessing to persons who need Jesus Christ as Savior. The Sunday School can be viewed as a church helping Christians grow through Bible knowledge and minister to others in His name.” Harry Piland, 1980

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“The Sunday School is the finest integrated church growth tool on the market today” Ken Hemphill, 1996

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“Sunday School is the foundational strategy in a local church for leading people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for building Great Commission Christians through Bible study groups that engage people in evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship.” Bill Taylor, 1999



Banner

**“Why  
do Sunday  
Schools  
not grow?”**





## HOW TO HELP A SUNDAY SCHOOL GROW

1. Be on top of statistics and use them to help your church members understand your growth patterns. How can this be done?

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8. Create New Units. How can this be done?

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9. Training How can this be done?

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10. Concentrate on Enrollment. How can this be done?

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11. Getting Our S.S. Headed In The Right Direction  
How can this be done?

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# ENROLLMENT



# REACHING PROSPECTS

# CREATING NEW UNITS

# ENLISTING, TRAINING, AND USING WORKERS



# SPACE

# MINISTRY CONTACT

# WORKERS IN TRAINING

# SUNDAY SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETINGS



# ATTENDANCE

# PERSONS IN DISCIPLESHIP

# WORSHIP ATTENDANCE

# OFFERINGS



# FAITH TEAMS

# BAPTISMS