

AN OVERVIEW OF SUNDAY SCHOOL

Introduction

In order to have an *overview* of the Sunday School organization first we have to take a step back to gain perspective. Our *view* is determined by our vantage point. We need to see Sunday School for what it is, and for what it could be. Our *view* of Sunday School brings expectations that generate our anticipation which in turn invokes our participation.

Sunday School is more than just what happens within the four-walls on Sunday mornings. Churches are full of Sunday School classes. The real question is: Are Sunday School classes fulfilling their mission? Or, are classes simply logging time together each Sunday morning for an hour and fifteen minutes? This gets at the heart of the matter: What is the purpose of Sunday School? Why do churches have Sunday School? What is the expected outcome?

“My Sunday School class exists to...” _____

_____ **“REACH People, TEACH people, LOVE (minister to) people”** _____

We would all agree that we should be intentional in approaching Sunday School. We should have a target and aim at it; it should be centered in the crosshairs of our scope.

Each Sunday School class, in a sense, is a miniature congregation which makes each Sunday School teacher its miniature pastor. Whatever the pastor does for the church body as a whole, the teacher does for the Sunday School class on a smaller scale.

An Overview of Sunday School Philosophy

Our purpose: to REACH people, TEACH people, and LOVE (i.e. minister to) people

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction.

–Matthew 9:35

1. Leaders need to recognize **THE NEED FOR** and **IMPORTANCE OF** a small group structure in the church. “Without Sunday School, how would we...?”
2. The church should grow **LARGER** and **SMALLER** all at the same time.
3. The **JERUSALEM** Church met in large and small group settings.

And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus. –Acts 5:42

4. Sunday School provides a **MECHANISM** to accomplish our mission.
5. Mission is best **ORGANIZED** in small groups.
6. Sunday School puts **FEET** to the great commission.

REACH: An Overview of Evangelism Through the Sunday School

Evangelism best takes place within the context of small groups.

1. Sunday School classes **ACCOMMODATE** growth. Room for the people.
2. Sunday School classes **ASSIMILATE** growth. People have a place to fit.
3. Sunday School classes **ACCELERATE** growth. Exponential development.
4. Sunday School classes **ACCESS** more growth. Multiplication.
5. Sunday School builds **RELATIONAL BRIDGES** for the unchurched to walk away from the world and into the church.

TEACH: An Overview of Discipleship Through the Sunday School

Discipleship best takes place within the context of small groups.

1. Jesus did His most **INTENSE** discipleship in a small group setting.
And he appointed twelve (whom he also named apostles) so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach. –Mark 3:14
2. Jesus did His most **INTIMATE** discipleship in a small group setting. (John 13-14)
3. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). Therefore, we must teach...
 - Bible **PASSAGES** and Bible **STORIES**.
 - **DOCTRINE** and **APOLOGETICS**.
 - Life **APPLICATION**.
4. Discipleship is produced by...
 - **BIBLE STUDY**
So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples...” –John 8:31
Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation. –1Peter 2:2
 - **RELATIONSHIPS**
And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. –Hebrews 10:24-25
5. Discipleship is not just teaching the Word of God, it is teaching the people to **OBSERVE** (“do”) the Word of God.
Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” –Matthew 28:19-20

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.
–James 1:22-25

6. Ultimately, discipling others will transform them from being “spiritual **CONSUMERS** to being “spiritual **CONTRIBUTORS.**”

About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing. For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil. –Hebrews 5:11-14

LOVE: An Overview of Ministry Through the Sunday School

Ministry best takes place within the context of small groups.

1. Ministry best takes place within the context of **RELATIONSHIPS** (long-term).
2. Jesus came to **SERVE** (διακονέω “minister” practical love).

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. –Mark 10:45

3. The last lesson Jesus taught His disciples was to **SERVE OTHERS.**

When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you.
–John 13:12-15

4. Sunday School classes are God's **SERVICE CENTERS.**

TOGETHER: An Overview of Fellowship Through the Sunday School

Fellowship best takes place in the context of small groups.

1. Fellowship starts with knowing people's **NAMES.**

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. –John 10:1-3

2. Class leaders should know every person on their Sunday School roll by **NAME.**

3. God **KNOWS US** by name.
Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. –Luke 10:20
4. True fellowship means we **BELONG** to each other.
For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. –1Corinthians 12:12-13
5. True fellowship means we **SUPPORT** one another.
[T]hat there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. –1Corinthians 12:25-26
6. True fellowship means we **GIVE OURSELVES** to each other.
By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brothers. –1John 3:16

Conclusion

1. Everyone is afforded the opportunity to **GET INVOLVED** through Sunday School.
2. Sunday School gives people **OWNERSHIP** of the mission...
 - Some people will take ownership of **EVANGELISM.**
 - Some people will take ownership of **DISCIPLESHIP.**
 - Some people will take ownership of **MINISTRY.**
 - Some people will take ownership of **FELLOWSHIP.**
3. Hopefully, this *overview* of Sunday School will help your *view*. We desire to see your vantage point moved back to the “big picture.” Why? Because Sunday School leaders are **SHEPHERDS** who *view* the sheep up close and personal. So, how’s your *view*? This is how we get new teachers, from among the sheep!
 - What does a butcher see when he *views* a sheep? **LAMB CHOPS.**
 - What does a clothier see when he *views* a sheep? **WOOL.**
 - What does a wolf see when he *views* sheep? **DINNER.**
 - What does a shepherd see when he *views* sheep? **NEEDS.**

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7. Leaders need to recognize _____ and _____ a small group structure in the church. “Without Sunday School, how would we...?”
8. The church should grow _____ and _____ all at the same time.
9. The _____ Church met in large and small group settings.

And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus. –Acts 5:42

10. Sunday School provides a _____ to accomplish our mission.
11. Mission is best _____ in small groups.
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9. Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). Therefore, we must teach...
 - Bible _____ and Bible _____.
 - _____ and _____.
 - Life _____.
10. Discipleship is produced by...
 - _____
So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples...” –John 8:31
Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation. –1Peter 2:2
 - _____
And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. –Hebrews 10:24-25
11. Discipleship is not just teaching the Word of God, it is teaching the people to _____ (“do”) the Word of God.
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8. Sunday School classes are God’s _____.

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9. God _____ by name.
Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven. –Luke 10:20
10. True fellowship means we _____ to each other.
For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. –1Corinthians 12:12-13
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Conclusion

4. Everyone is afforded the opportunity to _____ through Sunday School.
5. Sunday School gives people _____ of the mission...
- Some people will take ownership of _____.
 - Some people will take ownership of _____.
 - Some people will take ownership of _____.
 - Some people will take ownership of _____.
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 - What does a clothier see when he *views* a sheep? _____.
 - What does a wolf see when he *views* sheep? _____.
 - What does a shepherd see when he *views* sheep? _____.