

Revitalizing Sunday School

Part 1: Re-Envisioning Sunday School



Instructor's Guide

Church Renewal Resource
Evangelism Ministries USA/Canada Region
Church of the Nazarene

Acknowledgments

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Evangelism Ministries

Church of the Nazarene

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Preparation Checklist

The following information will help you prepare to instruct this module.

- Review the material and make notes of specific areas for special emphasis.
- Check to ensure the following materials are available:
 - PowerPoint presentations
 - Participant booklet (copy as needed)
- Gather the following materials:
 - Pens and/or pencils
 - Other material you want to use
- Make copies of the Participant Handout for each participant
- Check the classroom for:
 - Projector
 - Sufficient number of tables and chairs for the participants
- Arrange the room so that each church team sits around an individual table and you have ample room to move among the teams.

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The table below identifies each module section, the time allotted for each section, and a brief description of the section's objective. When you are familiar with this module, you may want to teach from this page rather than the detailed information.

SECTION	TIME	PAGE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
I. Module Introduction	5 mins.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce module, objectives, and outline.
II. Lecture	25 mins.	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitator presents information that will help participants see Sunday School as an effective method for making disciples.
III. Small Group Exercise	15 mins.	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants work in teams to reflect on the information presented in the lecture and begin applying the concepts.
IV. Discussion	5 mins.	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants share thoughts about the information presented and insights about how the information will assist in their leadership. Two possible questions to start the discussion in addition to the questions answered during the exercise are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -What new ideas or thoughts did God reveal to you? -What new techniques will you begin using as you think about others in your church?
V. Action Planning/ Reporting	20 mins.	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants begin preparing for their homework assignment: Complete the Class/Group Leadership Team assessment for each youth/adult Sunday School class. Work with the Sunday School teachers and the classes' leadership teams to recruit class members for the available positions. Focus on recruiting for the Outreach Leader and Care Leader position first. In preparing for these activities, participants discuss how, who, when, and expected results. Participants will report the activities at the next workshop.
VI. Module Wrap-up	5 mins.	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close the module with your final comments regarding the topic.
Total Module Time: 75 mins.			

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For more information go to :

I. Module Introduction

(5 Minutes)

Notes

Let the participants know the material is theirs to keep and encourage them to take notes. The underlined text represents the blanks in the participant booklet.

The participant material includes:

- Purpose
- Objectives
- “Fill-in-the-blanks” for the lecture
- Application exercises

The purpose of this module is to:

See Sunday School effectively making disciples.

The objectives for this module are:

- *Focus on outreach to lost people (inviting);*
- *Understand the magnetism of fellowship evangelism (including);*
- *Embrace a variety of teaching opportunities as legitimate expressions of Sunday School (instructing).*

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II. Lecture

Notes

The small group of choice for most churches is still Sunday School. This ministry has continued in one form or another since the 1770's. While some devalue this old tradition, there are others who take advantage of the strengths Sunday School presents. Sunday School provides a steady diet of Bible study, is more evangelistic than most leaders think and offers fellowship and acceptance into the life of the congregation.

As with any ministry, Sunday School needs to be refreshed. New approaches can make their way into how Christian education happens in the local congregation. Revitalizing Sunday School suggests a few modifications to improve and to strengthen ministry in the local church.

The church needs Sunday School to:

1. **PROVIDE** pastoral care
 - 1/4 to 1/2 of the Sunday School class time should be spent **CARING** (praying, sharing, fellowshiping) for each other.
2. **OPEN** evangelistic opportunities
 - Sunday School draws the attention of Christians toward the world.
 - Sunday School is itself an evangelistic ministry; it gives people a chance to accept Christ. It reaches out to people through caring relationships, and it incorporates them into comfortable settings where the Bible is taught and Christian care is offered.
3. **ENHANCE** fellowship and acceptance
 - Sunday School places the emphasis on **PEOPLE**.
 - Small group settings permit us to become involved in the lives of a particular individual. Sunday School provides a natural social **GROUPING** by age and interest.
 - Sunday School gives a place for people to **SERVE**. In addition to the leadership tasks of the Sunday School, there needs to be a variety of meaningful tasks in each class through which individuals can minister (outreach leader, fellowship leader, secretary, prayer leader, care group leader, etc).

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For more information go to :

II. Lecture (cont.)

4. **TRAIN** people to serve
 - A primary purpose is to **GRADUATE** people out of adult classes into ministry. As new classes are formed, some of the leaders who have been part of a healthy, growing class become the core for the new class.
5. **PROVIDE** an organizational framework and administrative supervision.
 - The Sunday School gives all the organization needed for most churches. It is the basic structure for reaching, teaching, and leadership development. The church grows by expanding the Sunday School.
6. Enable leaders to **FOCUS** on tasks to be accomplished
 - When there is a clearly defined approach to accomplishing the mission of the church, more energy is applied.
7. **TIE** pastor and laity together by a mutual mission
8. **TEACH** people God's Word.
9. **ACCESS** people's needs, thoughts and visions
 - The small group (class) setting, coupled with the Sunday School structure, permits an effective flow of information up and down throughout the entire church.

Jesus instructed His followers to **MAKE** disciples. Let's review how Jesus said we are to make disciples:

1. By **INITIATING** contact with the world
 - a. Jesus told his followers to become **ASSERTIVE**.
 - i. Go into all the world. (Matt. 25:19)
 - ii. If you greet those who greet you, what have you done more than the pagans? (Matt. 5:47)
 - b. Sunday School attempts to **REACH** unchurched people.
 - i. **TEACH** the biblical directive to minister. Our motivation for reaching out to the unchurched is rooted in scripture.
 - ii. **PRAY** often for unreached people.
 - iii. Plan events that will entice the unchurched to **RESPOND**.

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II. Lecture (cont.)

2. By **INCLUDING**

- a. Jesus taught His disciples to **BAPTIZE** people.
 - i. Baptism symbolizes **ACCEPTANCE** into church fellowship.
 - ii. By participating in the ceremony of baptism, the new Christian is **IDENTIFIED** with believers.
 - iii. Church people **WELCOME** new believers into friendship.
 - iv. An alive church **ATTRACTS** people.
- ii. Sunday School **ACCEPTS** new people into the friendship circle.
 - i. While membership requires spiritual growth, **ANYONE** can belong to the Sunday School.
 - ii. **INCLUDE** prospects on the responsibility list. Develop a plan to contact prospects in some kind of intentional way.
 - iii. **ASK** people if they would like to become a part of a Bible study. People today want to study the Bible as a guide for living, but most have never been invited to become part of a Bible study group.
 - iv. **ENROLL** them if they give a positive response.

3. By **INSTRUCTING**

- a. Jesus commanded us to **TEACH** people.
 - i. The Great Commission is both an evangelistic and **EDUCATIONAL** directive.
 - ii. We are never to separate evangelism from **EDUCATION**. To do so is to change the nature of each.
 - iii. Evangelism is an educational task. A knowledge base is necessary for responsiveness.
 - iv. **DISCIPLES** are made through an educational process.
- b. Sunday School **ADDRESSES** people's need to become Christ-like.

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II. Lecture (cont.)

- ii. Teaching influences behavioral **CHANGE** in people.
- iii. Teaching **ALTERS** the values people hold.
- iv. Teaching **TRANSFORMS** thinking patterns.

Summarize the lecture with the following points:

- 1. The Sunday School is to **FOCUS** on the Great Commission.
- 2. We make disciples by inviting, including, and **INSTRUCTING** people.

III. Small Group Exercise

(15 Minutes)

The small group exercise portion of the module provides an opportunity for the teams to discuss the information presented and how it applies to their church.

Turn to the Small Group Exercise portion of your participant booklet. Work with the team members from your church to complete the questions. You will have 15 minutes to complete the questions.

Remain available during the exercise time to answer questions. Announce to the group when five minutes remain. Again announce to the group when two minutes remain.

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IV. Discussion

(5 Minutes)

The discussion portion of the module provides an opportunity for people to share their thoughts about the purpose and importance of Sunday School.

- If you're ahead of schedule, the discussion can go a few extra minutes. However, it's easy to lose track of time so watch the clock.

Call the group back together and open the floor for discussion. If the group is hesitant to discuss, start with one of the questions they discussed during the exercise.

The questions were:

1. How do we presently seek to reach people?
2. What other methods might be effective?
3. How do we initially greet and treat newcomers?
4. How do we help people feel accepted, needed and wanted?
5. How relevant are the teaching/learning experiences in your Sunday School classes?
6. Where do you presently see the focus of Sunday School lessons?
Mark an 'X' on the continuum.

Content-centered

Life-changing

7. How do people best learn? Hearing, seeing or doing?
8. Where might these learning experiences be multiplied? Who might benefit from knowing this information?

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V. Action Planning/Reporting

(20 Minutes)

This section gives the participants an opportunity to discuss their plans for using this information when they return to their churches, as well as how they will share the information with others.

The homework assignment for this module is:

Complete the following Class/Group Leadership Team assessment for each youth/adult Sunday School class. Work with the Sunday School teachers and the classes' leadership teams to recruit class members for the available positions. Focus on recruiting for the Outreach Leader and Care Leader positions first.

Let's take about 20 minutes to discuss how you will begin impacting your Sunday School when you return to your church. In your material you have an Action Planning/Reporting page with your homework assignment. In your teams discuss and document how you will complete this assignment. You will probably need to continue this discussion when you return home.

Move among the groups to answer specific questions. Listen for discussions that are not focused on developing a plan and guide them into developing a plan. Let the groups know when there are five minutes remaining and ask them to begin to conclude their discussions.

VI. Module Wrap-up

(5 Minutes)

This section provides an opportunity to close the module.

Ask participants to share their thoughts about the module.
Answer any questions and provide encouragement.

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