

SUNDAY SCHOOL *Matters*

12 Matters that Matter to Your Church

Edited by

ALLAN TAYLOR

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CONTENTS

The Authors	4
How to Use This Resource	6
Session 1: Leadership Matters	10
<i>Allan Taylor</i>	
Session 2: Vision Matters	14
<i>David Francis</i>	
Session 3: Souls Matter	18
<i>Bob Mayfield</i>	
Session 4: Teaching Matters	22
<i>Ken Coley</i>	
Session 5: Transformation Matters	26
<i>Eric Geiger</i>	
Session 6: Curriculum Matters	30
<i>Dan Cook</i>	
Session 7: Ministry Matters	34
<i>Ben Pritchett</i>	
Session 8: Organization Matters	38
<i>Eugene McCormick</i>	
Session 9: Assimilation Matters	42
<i>Thom Rainer</i>	
Session 10: Growth Matters	48
<i>Carter Shotwell</i>	
Session 11: New Groups Matter	52
<i>Bruce Raley</i>	
Session 12: Now Matters.	56
<i>Allan Taylor</i>	
Sunday School Ministry Contact Information	64

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HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

The following tips will help you maximize the effectiveness of this Sunday School training resource.

The title of this resource is *Sunday School Matters*. If you don't make the effort to conduct this 12-session training with intentionality, preparation, and enthusiasm, you've already sent the signal that Sunday School doesn't matter. Remember:

- Sunday School matters!
- This training resource matters!
- The training and edification of your leaders matter!
- So conduct this time as if it matters!

Sunday School matters so much that a church must have a proper enlistment of the leaders who matter most—teachers. James 3:1 instructs, “Not many should become teachers, my brothers, knowing that we will receive a stricter judgment” (HCSB). The Word of God places a higher standard on those who teach the Bible. On page 9 you'll find a suggested Sunday School teacher commitment that you can use to enlist teachers. Over time you can change your Sunday School one committed teacher at a time.

PREPLANNING

1. Promote the schedule and participation in this training weeks in advance.
2. Promote this training in the church bulletin, on the church website, by email, and during worship-service announcements.

3. Invite all Sunday School leaders through personal contacts.
4. Invite all potential Sunday School leaders through personal contacts.
5. Schedule one hour for each session—30 minutes to view the video teaching and 30 minutes to follow up with discussion and application, using the questions and exercises in each session of this study guide.
6. Make sure you're prepared to apply the principles from each session to your Sunday School by using the "Drive It Home" portion of each session in this study guide.
7. Make sure everyone has a study guide. Following along and filling in the blanks during the video session will keep each participant engaged in the teaching and will provide a resource for future reference.
8. Have pens available.

MEETING ROOM

1. Reserve a room for each session. It's best to use the same space each time.
2. Have comfortable chairs and arrange them so that everyone can clearly see the screen(s).
3. Show the sessions on a screen or screens large enough for everyone to see. Make sure the sound is adequate for the room size.
4. Make sure the room temperature is comfortable.

5. We don't encourage eating while viewing the sessions. This will distract learners and minimize the effectiveness of the sessions. We recommend a gathering time before the sessions for food and fellowship.

SETTINGS

This training can be offered in a variety of settings.

1. During regularly scheduled Sunday School leadership meetings
2. All day Saturday
3. Friday evening through Saturday
4. 12 consecutive Wednesday nights
5. 12 consecutive Sunday afternoons or nights
6. 12 consecutive Sunday mornings before other scheduled services and activities
7. A retreat setting
8. Because Sunday School is the way many congregations do church, offer the training for the whole church on Wednesday or Sunday evenings.
9. We don't recommend individual viewing of the video sessions. Group viewing and discussion build synergy, camaraderie, and teamwork. Everyone can share and build on others' knowledge and experience. Sharing the same point of reference builds accountability into the leader's application points.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER COMMITMENT

Carefully and prayerfully read the following teacher commitment. Respond by writing yes or no after each statement. Sign and date if you wish to join a team of leaders who are committed to minister to people and carry out the Great Commission through Sunday School.

1. I have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.
2. I feel called by God to serve Him through the Sunday School.
3. I will strive to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
4. I will be committed to the inerrancy of Scripture and to the doctrine of the church.
5. I will conduct my life in a manner that is above reproach.
6. I will be committed to teach with excellence through both preparation and presentation.
7. I will participate in training and growing opportunities.
8. I will participate in Sunday School leadership meetings.
9. I will personally engage with lost and unchurched people and will lead my class to do so.
10. I will do all I can to create a class that is loving, inviting, accepting, and friendly to all.
11. I will be faithful in tithing 10 percent of my gross income.
12. I will completely abstain from alcoholic beverages.
13. I will be faithful in attending the church's worship services.
14. I will support the pastor and staff.
15. I will strive to begin a new class every two years.
16. Before my Lord Jesus Christ, I commit to serve Him and His church by faithfully ministering through Sunday School.

SIGNED

DATE

SESSION 1

LEADERSHIP

Matters

Leadership is the most important factor in Sunday School!
Nothing matters beyond the point where the leader takes it.
If Sunday School is to *matter* in your church, then it must *matter*
to those who lead it.

Verse that Matters

He [David] shepherded them with a pure heart
and guided them with his skillful hands.

PSALM 78:72, HCSB

WHY LEADERSHIP MATTERS

Statement that Matters

Your leadership is perfectly designed
to produce the results you're getting!¹

- When you design your leadership, you design your ministry. Your leadership is the blueprint of the ministry you are building.

Sunday School shoulders a tremendous ministry load for your church and is the Great Commission arm of the church. But all this work will go undone if we do not have proper leadership.

Tasks aren't self-sustaining; they all depend on someone to execute them faithfully, responsibly, specifically, and passionately.

THE WHAT AND HOW OF LEADERSHIP

1. What do leaders do? Leaders _____.

A. Leaders are _____.

In the NFL you don't throw to open receivers; you throw receivers open.

STEVE YOUNG, HALL OF FAME QUARTERBACK



B. Leaders take the ministry to a _____ level.

- Leaders refuse to accept _____.
- Jesus isn't the _____ for mediocrity.

2. What do leaders do? Leaders are _____.

A. Vision drives everything.

B. Leaders are _____.

- The height of your doing will never _____ the height of your thinking.
- Leaders think _____.

3. What do leaders do? Leaders _____.

A. Leaders are _____ - _____.

Status-quo statement: "We shall not be moved."

Leadership statement: "I will move."

- Jesus didn't follow the crowd; He led it. Jesus didn't report the news; He made it.

B. Leaders are _____.

How do you change a mediocre Sunday School?

- Set enlistment standards. You cannot build a great Sunday School with uncommitted leaders (see Jas. 3:1). "Sunday School Teacher Commitment" (p. 9) is a helpful enlistment tool that provides key leadership standards.
- Surround yourself with godly advisers (see Prov. 15:22).
- Understand that change comes in small increments: one person at a time, one meeting at a time, one training session at a time, and one conversation at a time.
- Come to grips with your own biblical convictions, vision, and strategy for Sunday School, because nothing will *matter* until it first *matters* to you.

4. What do leaders do? Leaders _____.

A. Leaders possess a strong threefold cord: burden, conviction, and passion.

B. Leadership never rises from a vacuum; it rises from a _____ in the soul.

C. Leaders are willing to pay the price ... and it will cost.

- Leaders must go the _____.

D. Every next level of your Sunday School will demand
a _____ of you.

DRIVE IT HOME

1. How would you rate the effectiveness of your Sunday School ministry? Mark a number on the scale. Why did you rate your Sunday School that way?

Weak 1 2 3 4 5 Strong

2. Does your rating reflect your leadership? How?

3. Where would you place yourself on the conformist-catalyst-rebel continuum?

4. As a leader, do you have a vision for your Sunday School? If so, can you write it? Read and discuss Habakkuk 2:2.

5. What areas of your Sunday School are strong? Why?

6. What areas of your Sunday School are weak? Why?

7. In what areas has mediocrity been tolerated?

8. What one area will you take the initiative to improve?

9. Do your Sunday School leaders know the purpose of Sunday School? Do your Sunday School leaders communicate that purpose to others?

10. How can your Sunday School leadership team design a Sunday School that produces the results you desire?

1. Adapted from Tom Northup, as quoted in "101 Inspiring Leadership Quotes," *resourcefulmanager* [online, cited 31 August 2016]. Available from the Internet: resourcefulmanager.com.