

Leadership Meeting Agenda

Understanding the People Group I Work With—All Leaders Together

Prepared by:

Dean Abernathy, Ministry Specialist, Leadership and Evangelism Training and Events, LifeWay Christian Resources

PREPARE:

- Read *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis (available as a free download at www.lifeway.com/DavidFrancis).
- Prior to the meeting, enlist a Sunday School leader from each age group (children, students, and adults). Give each of these leaders a copy of *Missionary Sunday School* and ask them to read the book, paying particular attention to Chapter 3, “Every Person.” Provide copies of the following two assignments that you will ask them to lead for their age-group during the leadership meeting.

Segment #1 (pp. 32-35): What’s Your Assigned People Group?

1. My Sunday School class is assigned to reach and minister to _____.
(Fill in the appropriate people group.)
2. Share three characteristics/qualities of the people group your class has been assigned.
3. Share three reasons you love the people group your class has been assigned.
4. Name two specific Sunday School actions your class has done this month to reach your people group.

Segment #2 (pp. 34-37): Getting to Know Your People Groups

1. Discuss why it’s important to know your people group.
2. Share the difference in knowing your people group and knowing someone’s story.
3. Why is it necessary for each person’s story to intersect with His Story?

Provide the following resources:

- Nametags, markers, large sheets of paper, masking tape
- Copies of *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis
- CD or MP3 player and Christian praise music

Display the following resources:

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis

Prepare the room for learning:

- Place nametags on a table near the entrance. Arrange chairs in a semicircle.
- Have Christian praise music playing in the background.

PRESENT:

1. INTRODUCTION (30 min.)

Greet leaders and ask them to complete a nametag. Begin by telling the group that today’s session will focus on understanding the various people groups that we are reaching or have potential to reach through our Sunday School. Our insights about people groups will be enhanced as we study *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis.

Ask: *Why do you think it’s important for you, a Sunday School leader, to understand the people group you’re assigned to reach?* (to genuinely care for people and reach them for Christ, you must identify with their age and stage in life; to know them personally)

Direct participants to Chapter Three of *Missionary Sunday School*. Provide an overview of the chapter, emphasizing the information regarding people groups on pages 32-37.

Group leaders based on the age group they teach (children, students, and adults). Identify the person you previously enlisted to lead the group. Ask groups to respond to the questions in Segment #1 (see assignment above) and record responses on a large sheet of paper. Allow each group to share. Facilitate the report time to focus on the value of empathizing and understanding the people groups we're assigned to reach and minister to.

2. GETTING TO KNOW YOUR PEOPLE GROUP (20 min.)

Ask the facilitators you enlisted to share clarification and details needed beyond your overview and then lead the group to answer the Segment #2 questions (see assignment above).

3. CONCLUSION (10 min.)

Share: *When it comes to understanding the people we work with, we need to look beyond the standard people groups we have in Sunday School (age graded or life stage groups).* Challenge the group to understand the responsibility for reaching other people groups in our community.

Groups that may need your understanding in order for you to reach them:

- An age group not being reached (graduate students, children with special needs)
- An ethnic group that is prevalent in your community
- A life stage group (single on Sunday, parents of preschoolers)
- A group too far from the church to attend (start a new Bible study unit at their location)
- A group that cannot attend on Sunday morning (shift workers, hospital employees)

Things you may need to consider in order for you to reach certain groups:

- Pray for them.
- Study, explore, read, and learn about them.
- Spend time with them to get to know them and develop a relationship with them.
- Schedule Bible study where and when it's convenient for them.
- Allow these groups to function with relaxed guidelines.
- Allow them to give you suggestions on ways to minister to them and their friends.
- Love them.

Say: *Ultimately, what have we discovered today that broadens our understanding of the people group we work with? What will we do differently in and through Sunday School to reach more people in our community for Christ?* Make a list of actions to implement immediately.

Leadership Meeting Agenda

Understanding the People Group I Work With—Adults

Prepared by:

Alan Raughton, Lead Adult Ministry Specialist, Leadership and Evangelism Training and Events, LifeWay Christian Resources

PREPARE:

- Read Chapter 3: “Every Person” from *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis.

Provide the following resources:

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis (available as a free download at www.lifeway.com/davidfrancis)
- Nametags, large sheets of paper, markers, pens, masking tape, index cards

Prepare the room for learning:

- Arrange chairs in circles of five or six per circle.
- Place nametags and markers on a table near the room entrance.
- Place index cards in each chair.

PRESENT:

1. INTRODUCTION (5 min.)

Welcome leaders as they enter the room. Ask everyone to complete a nametag before sitting in one of the groups. Most of your leaders will know each other. However use this as an example that everyone needs to wear nametags in their class each week because we are expecting new people to attend.

As leaders get seated, encourage them to introduce themselves to those in their group and share the age or affinity group they teach.

Share with leaders that this session will help them better understand the group they are assigned to reach, teach, and minister. Their chairs are arranged in small groups so everyone is able to share in the discussions to follow.

2. WHAT’S YOUR ASSIGNED PEOPLE GROUP (20 min.)

Comment: Sunday School is for everyone! Though your class can’t reach every adult, you can reach those to whom you are assigned. Therefore it is important to understand our assigned people group. Read or summarize “The Clearer the Better” on pages 33-34 of *Missionary Sunday School*.

Discuss in small groups: *Describe the people group your class is assigned to reach.* Encourage leaders to be as specific as possible.

Help leaders determine where they can find potential members of their assigned group. Instruct them to list on the index cards places you might find people in your assigned group.

Ask: *Where does your people group live? Where do they congregate? Soccer fields? Schools? Walking trails?*

Allow time for leaders to record their responses. Have leaders share their responses with others in their group. This sharing of ideas can help prompt additional responses.

3. UNDERSTAND YOUR PEOPLE GROUP (15 min.)

Have each group discuss: *What are the needs, issues, and concerns of the adults I teach?* Have groups record responses on large sheets of paper. Debrief by asking teams to report to the larger group. Leave sheets displayed on the walls around the room.

Remind leaders that we don't simply teach a lesson. We teach people the Bible, people who have specific needs, issues, and concerns. State: *Some of these individuals come to our Bible study looking for ways the Scripture can help them with life issues. It is important to remember the needs, issues, and concerns of those we teach so that they can look for specific ways to apply the Bible study to those needs each week.*

4. FOCUS ON YOUR PEOPLE GROUP (15 min.)

Based on the list of needs, issues, and concerns identified, discuss the following in small groups:

- *What class environment meets these needs?*
- *What class organization is needed to meet these needs?*
- *What teaching style best meets these needs?*

There are unchurched people that need to be part of your class. Encourage leaders to think as missionaries to these unchurched individuals.

Ask each group to stand and form a circle. Leaders will form a circle facing each other. Point out that most Adult Sunday School classes tend to be inwardly focused because it is more comfortable and it is what we are accustomed to. Instruct the groups to form a circle facing outward. Ask them to hold hands and note that it is a little more uncomfortable to do this, but when we see lives changed because of our outward focus, we'll be in a new comfort zone. This needs to be our new normal in order to reach, teach, and minister to those whom we are assigned.

5. CONCLUSION (5 Min.)

Challenge leaders think about the places they go and the people they meet that are part of their people group. Ask groups to pray for boldness in discovering and inviting people to participate in life-changing Bible study—Sunday School.

Leadership Meeting Agenda

Understanding the People Group I Work With—Students

Prepared by:

Chuck Gartman, Youth Ministry Professor, Howard Payne University, Brownwood, Texas

PREPARE:

Provide the following resources:

- Nametags, markers, pencils
- Secure a computer, projector, and access to the Internet. Arrange to show this video clip: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzZyUaQvpdc>. Watch this video before showing it to your group; it's overwhelming in regard to the statistical information.
- Prepare a handout with these eight topics on one side of the sheet and the next six topics on the back. Below the six topics on the back, type "How to Minister to Students" and number from 1 to 7. Allow space for writing between each numbered item.
 - Understanding the World of Teenagers
 - 1) Current Musicians
 - 2) Teenage Magazines
 - 3) Popular Television Shows
 - 4) Current Movies and their Ratings
 - 5) Fashion Trends
 - 6) Family Issues
 - 7) Teen Concerns
 - 8) The Internet and other Technological Devices
 - Understanding Teenage Development
 - 1) Spiritual Development
 - 2) Physical Development
 - 3) Cognitive Development
 - 4) Social Development
 - 5) Emotional Development
 - 6) Family Development
- Secure eight large sheets of paper. Label each one with one of the topics listed under "Understanding the World of Teenagers."
- Note that the two pages following this agenda contain valuable insights about adolescent development. Provide these as a handout for student leaders or refer to them as the issues are discussed. The Family Development segment of Step 3 will need to be completed based on the family situations your students are currently experiencing.

Display the following resources:

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis
- *Youth Culture 101* by Walt Mueller
- *Engaging the Soul of Youth Culture* by Walt Mueller

Prepare the room for learning:

- Set up chairs in groups of four to six. Place nametags in chairs.
- Put the eight large sheets of paper you prepared on walls throughout the room.

PRESENT:

1. INTRODUCTION (15 min.)

As your workers arrive, have them write as much information as they know concerning youth culture items on the sheets of paper on the walls. Make it fun. Some people will probably try to

think of movies, music, or television shows from their own age's perspective. Keep them focused on what is current. Do research yourself to make sure you know what is current.

Debrief what they wrote on the tear sheets. Call for responses. Encourage them to record important thoughts/insights on the handout. Again make this fun. Remind them of two reasons to know the culture of youth (it's not so that they can appear cool to teenagers): 1) The older you get, the more difficult it is to make connections with teens (the more you know about what is going on in their world, the more you can carry on conversations with them about spiritual matters); and 2) Sometimes we can take what they know (their culture) and relate it to what they need to know from the Scripture. A quote from a current movie, magazine, or television show can do wonders for keeping the lines of communication open with teens in a Bible study setting.

2. CONNECTING TO WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE WORLD OF TEENS (10 min.)

Comment: What appears to be a fad to us is really no fad at all. Social Networks are here to stay and the more we know about them, the more we can minister to the teenagers in our care.

Watch the YouTube video "Socialnomics 2011." Invite responses. If time permits, watch it again because the information comes at them in such a rapid manner. Discuss the implications.

3. CONNECTING TO WHAT'S HAPPENING IN TEENAGE DEVELOPMENT (20 min.)

Instruct leaders to work in groups to complete the back of their handout, Understanding Teenage Development. Provide copies of Developmental Life Issues after groups have recorded their own ideas. Work together to complete the section of Family Development.

Ask: How can knowing and implementing these things about adolescent development improve your teaching? Be prepared to suggest that they may not want to teach younger teens with the same methods and approaches with which they teach older teens and vice versa. Remind them that material they use should include different learning approaches.

4. CONCLUSION (15 min.)

Say: Knowing about the world of teenagers and their development can help us be better Bible study leaders. Some practical helps to guide teenagers toward spiritual maturity: 1) Demonstrate authentic love (unconditional); 2) Build trust through unconditional acceptance (they will stretch the boundaries you set); 3) Demonstrate that Christianity is a relationship with the Living God; 4) Emphasize Christian community (genuine fellowship); 5) Emphasize the supernatural; 6) Tell stories of real people (yours is important!); and 7) Pray for them and tell that you do. Close with prayer.

Developmental Life Issues

Younger Youth (12-15 years old)

1. Physical Development

- At the onset of puberty, a youth looks very much like a child.
- Puberty puts the body in rapid overdrive. Hormones kick in, causing massive growth spurts and the initiation of the sex drive causes all kinds of physical changes. Secondary sexual characteristics are developing.
- Weight fluctuates; girls are especially conscious of this change. Guys and girls are awkward because of these growth spurts.
- Acne may become a problem for many youth and it can affect their self-esteem and emotional development in a number of ways.

2. Emotional Development

- They begin to develop their own sense of identity.
- They are self-conscious and self-centered, but are gaining self-confidence.
- They are full of enthusiasm.
- They'd love to be independent, but are still dependent on their parents.
- They vacillate between being friendly and being moody.

3. Social Development

- They want to fit in. High value is placed on same-sex relationships.
- They are often cliquish; they have a few close friends.
- They are often overly critical and have unrealistic expectations of themselves and others.
- Guys start getting interested in girls (girls have already developed interest in guys).
- Hero worship and crushes are common.
- They are usually most comfortable in same-sex groups.
- They test the limits and experiment with different behaviors.

4. Mental Development

- They don't necessarily accept others' beliefs (especially their parents'). They want proof.
- At about age 12, youth move into the early stages of abstract thinking and what is called the formal operations stage. They can begin to understand abstract concepts such as social justice and rational, aesthetic, or social ideals.
- They enjoy problem solving, looking for alternatives and consequences.
- Personal values are beginning to influence their decisions.
- Early on in this process, adolescents tend to be very clumsy in their decision-making. They begin to think of so many alternatives that they make poor decisions.

5. Spiritual Development

- The very first step in the spiritual life is for the person to know he or she is loved—based simply on being, with no regard to performance or accomplishment.
- They are generally interested in a relationship with Christ. (Up to 80 percent of people make professions of faith before they are 18.)
- They are able to make genuine commitments but may revisit them as they grow older.
- Right and wrong are prominent in their thinking.
- Initially, this group tends to mirror its parents' personal values.
- They can respond to social issues and have a great ability to respond to the needs of those who are less fortunate than they.

Developmental Life Issues

Older Youth (15-17 years old)

1. Physical Development

- By the end of puberty, youth look very much like adults.
- Until about age 16, girls precede boys in physical development by about two years, and are far ahead of their male peers in emotional maturity.
- They are very interested in personal health.
- They have tendencies toward eating disorders (especially girls).
- Many are sexually experienced.
- Acne is a problem for many youth and it can affect their self-esteem and emotional development.

2. Emotional Development

- They are fairly confident and secure with their own identity.
- They seek deeper, more meaningful relationships than before.
- They possess a desire for independence.
- They are aware of the need to be responsible for their own actions.
- They tend to be friendly toward their family.
- They are more giving of themselves; there is less self-centeredness.

3. Social Development

- They desire meaningful relationships, especially with members of the opposite sex.
- They are frequent daters.
- Their personal relationships tend to be more exclusive, especially in their relationships with members of the opposite sex.
- Many are sexually active.
- They have experienced rites of passage—getting a driver's license and upcoming graduation from high school.
- Most of them work part-time, which means they have spending money.

4. Mental Development

- They are very interested in the future.
- They have begun to focus on their careers.
- They recognize that decisions they make today affect their futures.
- They have the ability to process many things at one time.
- They tend to make better and more mature decisions than younger youth.
- They have the ability to resolve conflicts maturely.
- They learn to think more multidimensionally rather than being limited to single issues.

5. Spiritual Development

- They show the ability to make and keep a strong commitment to Christ.
- Their moral and spiritual values are often challenged at school and in social relationships.
- They are very interested in life after death.
- They are no longer content to believe what parents, ministers, and leaders have taught them up to this point. They want to understand and decide for themselves what they believe and why.
- They have the ability to grasp and apply deeper spiritual principles to their own lives than younger youth.

Leadership Meeting Agenda

Understanding the People Group I Work With—Childhood

Prepared by:

Bill Emeott, Lead Childhood Ministry Specialist, Childhood Ministry Training and Events,
LifeWay Christian Resources

PREPARE:

Provide the following resources:

- On separate index cards, print the words to Luke 2:52 (include the reference). Make two sets. Place each set of index cards in a separate lunch bag labeled: Luke 2:52.
- Heavy chord to create a clothesline between two chairs
- Provide clothes pins for each word of Luke 2:52 (two sets).
- Copies of “Characteristics of Preschoolers and Children” found in *Kids Ministry 101: Practical Answers to Questions About Kids Ministry* CD ROM, Item 32. If this book is not available, provide copies of Preschool Handout 2 from Missionary Sunday School Preschool Conference Plan and Children Handout 3 from Missionary Sunday School Children Conference Plan. These handouts are part of the set of Training Plans included in this zip file.
- Drawing paper and crayons
- On individual pieces of construction paper, print these headings: MENTAL, PHYSICAL, SPIRITUAL, SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL.

Display the following resources:

- *Kids Ministry 101: Practical Answers to Questions About Kids Ministry*

Prepare the room for learning:

- Arrange chairs in a semicircle facing the front of the room
- Prepare two clotheslines to be used in step 2.
- Tape the prepared headings on the focal wall.

PRESENT:

1. INTRODUCTION (5 min.)

Lead participants in a quick game of “What I Like Best.” In this game, players will listen for two choices and group themselves with others who also “like” their choice best. Use the following pairs to play the game. Add additional choices as time allows. Encourage participants to notice the likes and differences of those playing the game.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| ○ Coke or Pepsi | ○ Ford or Chevrolet |
| ○ milk chocolate or dark chocolate | ○ morning or night |
| ○ the beach or the mountains | ○ dogs or cats |
| ○ spring or fall | ○ BBQ brisket or BBQ pork |

Share: Today we’re going to consider the importance of understanding the people we’re trying to reach—their likes and differences, those characteristics that will help us reach, teach, and minister to them more effectively.

2. LUKE 2:52 (10 min.)

Divide the group into two teams. To each team give a prepared lunch bag with the words to Luke 2:52 placed inside. Lead participants to quote Luke 2:52. Instruct teams: *When I say “go,” player one from each team will draw a word card from the lunch bag and quickly move to the clothesline prepared at the other end of the room. Use a clothespin to attach the words in order. The first team to get Luke 2:52 in order wins. Review the verse.*

3. BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF KIDS (25 min.)

Share: Luke 2:52 teaches us that Jesus increased in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and with people. He grew according to God’s plan in four areas: mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially/emotionally. We can expect the boys and girls we teach to grow similarly. Understanding these general characteristics will help us to understand better the “people group” we have been called to reach.

Distribute “Characteristics of Preschoolers and Children.” Give the correct handout to each teacher (example: teachers leading 1st and 2nd graders will receive the Characteristics of 1st and 2nd graders). Encourage participants to consider these general characteristics of the age group they teach, identifying one or two characteristics they find particularly interesting.

Distribute drawing paper and crayons. Instruct each participant to draw a child emphasizing one or two characteristics found on their handout. After a couple of minutes, lead participants to share their drawings and the characteristics they emphasized, placing the art work under one of the headings on the focal wall.

4. SO WHAT? (15 min.)

Share: While every child is unique, knowing general characteristics will help us to plan for successful Bible study sessions. A kindergarten teacher who lectures for 30 minutes to her class doesn’t know her people group very well. Missionary Sunday School teachers strive to learn all they can about how their people group learns and how culture impacts their students. They want to know what their students are capable of grasping developmentally and plan accordingly.

Refer to the drawings on the wall. Ask participants to draw a “so what” conclusion from their drawings. Lead conferees to share an implication from the characteristic(s) emphasized on their drawings (example: a kindergartener pictured might have “springs” coming out of her shoes suggesting that she struggles being still for long periods of time. An implication might be that in order to best teach kindergarteners teachers should create classroom systems that allow kindergarteners to learn through movement). Give each participant an opportunity to share.

5. CONCLUSION (5 min.)

Pray, asking God to use the knowledge gained to better reach, teach, and minister to children.