

Leadership Meeting Agenda

Using a Plan of Study—All Leaders Together

Prepared by:

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

PREPARE:

- Become familiar with and knowledgeable about the purpose and focus of LifeSpan. Special attention should be paid to understanding the age group components of LifeSpan for children, students, and adults. Review the content of the resources listed at <http://www.lifeway.com/Article/Why-LifeSpan-can-make-a-difference-for-your-church>. Review the information and various components listed on the right column of the Web page for free downloads and resources regarding LifeSpan.
- Review these pages from *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis: “The Bible: The Textbook of Sunday School” (pp. 22-23), “All the Bible for All of Life” (pp. 25-26), “Ongoing Bible Study” (p. 27), and “Nurture or Evangelism?” (p. 28).

Provide the following resources:

- Provide copies of the LifeSpan chart for each participant and duplicate the age-group pages (Connect-Grow-Serve-Go, Know-Own-Known, and Hear-Know-Do).
- Prepare to show the LifeSpan “Faces” video from the Web site; provide the necessary AV equipment to show the video.
- Nametags, large sheets of paper, colored paper, masking tape, markers

Display the following resources:

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis
- Copies of the LifeSpan chart and three age group pages

Prepare the room for learning:

- Arrange chairs in three groups—one for leaders of Children, Students, and Adults. Place nametags and copies of LifeSpan age-group resources in each chair. Provide markers.
- Set up AV equipment to show LifeSpan “Faces” video.
- Make a LifeSpan sign on eight pieces of colored paper (one letter on each paper to spell L I F E S P A N). Attach the papers high on a side wall of the room to span 12 to 16 feet.
- Attach three age group signs (Children, Students, Adults) written on colored paper, approximately 6’ between each, under the LifeSpan letters already on the wall.

PRESENT:

1. INTRODUCTION (10 min.)

Thank leaders for their faithful service and their presence at today’s leadership meeting. Remind participants that one of the primary goals of every Sunday School leader should be to move members toward spiritual maturity. Comment: *Today’s session will be focused on LifeSpan, a strategy that will help move members to spiritual maturity.* (Familiarity with LifeSpan is beneficial even if groups are not currently using LifeWay curriculum.)

Show the LifeSpan “Faces” video (2:30 min.). Encourage viewers to see the faces in the video as representative of the faces currently in their classes and of all the faces of those that still need to be reached by your Sunday School.

2. LIFESPAN OVERVIEW (15 min.)

Ask participants to look at the LifeSpan chart provided. Present the purpose of LifeSpan: a strategy designed to help churches provide a comprehensive way to teach God's Word to individuals of all ages and to help each learner make progress towards spiritual maturity.

Using the chart, point out various aspects of the LifeSpan strategy:

- LifeSpan speaks to the needs of learners of all ages, birth to heaven, reminding us that from the start of our lives until we go to heaven, we should be growing and maturing as believers.
- LifeSpan takes into consideration the fact that different age groups learn in different ways; i.e. linear/prescriptive/discovery/balanced/integrated. An individual's life stage helps us to know what learning processes and mechanisms are appropriate for them, impacting the characteristics of the curriculum resources.
- LifeSpan helps leaders understand the appropriate biblical truths that should be taught to their age group, based on person's age, intellectual, and social development.
- LifeSpan uses action verbs that indicate the process each age group will implement in the maturation of their own spiritual learning.

3. AGE GROUPS COMPONENTS (30 min.)

Distribute documents about the characteristics of LifeSpan for each age group:

- Children—Hear, Know, Do
- Student—Know, Own, Known
- Adult—Connect, Grow, Serve, Go

Ask each group to: 1) study their age group document(s); 2) discuss the discoveries that they are making about how the LifeSpan strategy addresses the unique characteristics of each age group; 3) list on a large sheet of paper the significant discoveries this exercise in LifeSpan has helped them see about their age group; and 4) prepare to share those discoveries with the large group.

Call for each group to use the lists they've made to share their discoveries with the large group. Encourage feedback and group dialogue about these discoveries from the large group.

4. CONCLUSION (5 min.)

Remind the group that one of the purposes and values of LifeSpan is "it guides how we think about the development of Bible study plans and materials for use in the open, small, transformational communities called Sunday School classes." Close in prayer that our Bible study groups will work to move individuals toward spiritual maturity.

Leadership Meeting Agenda Using a Plan of Study—Adults

Prepared by:

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

PREPARE:

- Read Chapter 2, “His Story: All the Bible for All of Life” from *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis.
- Go to www.lifeway.com/adultstrategy to understand Connect-Grow-Serve-Go, a strategy for moving adults toward balanced spiritual growth.
- Download and copy an overview of the strategy from www.lifeway.com/adultstrategy.

Provide the following resources:

- Copies of *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis (available for free download at www.lifeway.com/DavidFrancis)
- Copies of the Connect-Grow-Serve-Go Adult Ministry Strategy Overview handout
- Yarn or string, long enough to reach across the room
- Nametags, masking tape, markers, large sheets of paper
- At least one copy of Leader Guide and Learner Guide used by adults in your church

Prepare the room for learning:

- Arrange chairs in a semicircle. Place nametags and markers on a table near the entrance.
- Attach yarn or string across the length of the room with masking tape. Place high enough for people to walk underneath.
- Place a copy of *Missionary Sunday School* and the Connect-Grow-Serve-Go Adult Ministry Strategy Overview handout in chairs.

1. INTRODUCTION (10 min.)

Welcome leaders and ask each person to complete a nametag. Explain to participants that today we are going to explore the importance of having a plan for an ongoing study of the whole Bible.

Hold up a Bible in one hand and a copy of a Leader Guide used in Sunday School in the other hand. Ask: *What is the textbook for Sunday School?* Explain that the Bible is our textbook; Leader and Learner Guides are aids to help us understand and apply the Scripture to our lives.

2. ALL THE BIBLE (10 min.)

Read the first sentence from page 25 of *Missionary Sunday School* (“One of the critical...”). Explain why it’s important to study the entire Bible over time, not just our favorite parts.

Ask: *What is your favorite food? What if all you ever ate was your favorite food? How healthy would you be?* Explain that the same is true when it comes to a study of God’s Word. We need to do more than study the parts of the Bible we enjoy most. We must have a plan of study that helps our learners encounter the whole counsel of God. A healthy diet of the entire Bible helps us to maintain a healthy spiritual life.

3. CONNECT-GROW-SERVE-GO (20 min.)

Encourage participants to silently consider: *Where are you in your walk with God? How would you rate your level of spiritual maturity?*

Direct participants to the yarn or string you placed across the room. State the yarn/string represents a line or continuum of spiritual maturity. Go to one side of the room where the string is attached and say: *This end of the continuum represents people without faith in Christ.* Walk to the other side of the room where the string is attached and say: *This side represents people who are very mature in their faith.*

Ask: *Where would you place yourself on the continuum—from an unbeliever (point to one side) to an individual very mature in his faith (point to other side of the room)?* Allow leaders to silently consider.

Ask: *Now think of the members of your class. Where are they on this continuum? How can you know?* (Responses could include attendance and participation in class, depth of responses in class, serving in church ministries, actively sharing their faith, etc.)

Provide participants with a copy of the handout Connect-Grow-Serve-Go Adult Ministry Strategy Overview. Review and discuss the elements of Connect–Grow–Serve–Go. Share that this strategy, and the Sunday School curriculum you use based on this strategy, can help produce spiritually balanced Christians, groups, and churches.

4. AN OPEN GROUP (15 min.)

State that each class should be an open group. An open group expects new people every week. New people should be able to attend or join your class any week. Direct leaders to silently read “The Open Group Dilemma” (pp. 26-27) and “Ongoing Bible Study” (p. 27) from *Missionary Sunday School*.

Form groups of four to six people. Ask groups to brainstorm ways their class can be an open group. Provide large sheets of paper and markers to record responses. Ask groups to report.

5. CONCLUSION (5 min.)

Summarize that the Bible study plan we use should provide a balance of the Bible’s books, topics, and characters in an ongoing format that anyone can join any week. The curriculum we use should be evangelistic and disciple people by helping them in their personal and spiritual walk. Close by asking leaders to pray for others in their group as they prepare to teach the upcoming Bible study session.

Leadership Meeting Agenda

Using a Plan for Study—Student

Prepared by:

Bruce Edwards, Youth Ministry Specialist, Tennessee Baptist Convention

PREPARE:

- Read *Are You Developing Students or Your Student Ministry?* by Scott Stevens (available at www.lifeway.com or at LifeWay Christian Stores)
- View this webinar: <https://lifeway.adobeconnect.com/a41466003/knowownknown/>. Pay close attention to slides 12-21.

Provide the following resources:

- Nametags, markers, large sheets of paper, masking tape, pencils
- Write these questions on the markerboard or on a large sheet of paper on the focal wall: *Is our church currently developing students or a student ministry? What is the difference?*
- Draw a large question mark on a sheet of paper and make a copy for each leader.
- Provide AV equipment for the PowerPoint presentation or prepare large sheets of paper with the information contained on slides 12-21 and 24 from <https://lifeway.adobeconnect.com/a41466003/knowownknown/>.
- Create a handout of slide 24 and make copies for each leader.
- Provide copies of current class rolls for each teach.

Display the following resources:

- *Are You Developing Students or Your Student Ministry?* by Scott Stevens (available at

Prepare the room for learning:

- Arrange chairs in a semicircle facing the front of the room. Place a pencil and a copy of the question mark handout in each chair.
- Place nametags and markers on a small table near the entrance to the room.

PRESENT:

1. INTRODUCTION (10 min.)

Greet conferees and ask them to prepare a nametag. Direct them to respond to the questions on the markerboard or large sheet of paper, using the paper provided.

Based on your knowledge from reading the book by Scott Stevens, guide a discussion of their responses. Explain that our goal for today's session will be to look at a strategy for helping students know what they believe and make it personal as well as to challenge students to share their beliefs with others.

Lead in prayer for the session.

2. THE BIBLE SAYS... (10 min.)

Call for leaders to look up Luke 2:52 in their Bibles. Ask several leaders to read the verse from a variety of translations. Ask: *What does this verse tell us about how Jesus developed?*

Introduce the Know-Own-Known strategy and explain that it is built off this verse.

Read Matthew 22:37-39 aloud from your Bible. Share that these verses are also an integral part of Know-Own-Known.

3. THE STRATEGY (30 min.)

Use slides 12-21 and 24 of the PowerPoint presentation from the Student Ministry webinar (<https://lifeway.adobeconnect.com/a41466003/knowownknown/>) to present the philosophy behind Know-Own-Known. (If you don't use the PowerPoint, present a mini-lecture with visuals you have created that includes all the information on these slides.)

Distribute the handout of slide 24 and review the information. Answer questions as they arise.

Ask: Why do we need this kind of strategy for students? How does this philosophy impact the way you teach students?

Read Luke 2:52 and Matthew 22:37-39 once again.

4. CHALLENGE (10 min.)

Distribute class rolls to each leader. Ask them to spend some quiet time in prayer for the students they teach, asking God to equip them to present the weekly Bible studies in such a way that they offer students a way to know Christ, to own their faith, and to make Him known by sharing their faith with others.

Leadership Meeting Agenda Using a Plan of Study—Childhood

Prepared by:

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

PREPARE:

Provide the following resources:

- Gather several toys that represent different ages/stages of life (a rattle, a teddy bear, building blocks, board game, football, handheld video game, cell phone, car keys).
- Copies of *Levels of Biblical Learning* (available for purchase in packs of 25 or as a free download from <http://www.lifeway.com/n/Church-Strategy/Levels-of-Biblical-Learning>.)
- Prior to the meeting, ask leaders to bring their Sunday School Leader Guides.

Display the following resources:

- The toys you gathered
- Current childhood curriculum samples
- Nametags, markers

Prepare the room for learning:

- Arrange chairs in a semi-circle facing the front of the room.
- Place nametags and markers on a small table near the entrance to the room.

PRESENT:

1. INTRODUCTION (10 min.)

Greet conferees and ask them to prepare a nametag.

Share with participants what your favorite toy was when you were a child. Ask volunteers to share their favorite toys.

2. LIFESPAN (5 min.)

Say: *As we grow, our favorite toys change. Show and comment on the display of age-graded toys. Continue: When you're a teenager a rattle is not an appropriate toy. Likewise, when you're in kindergarten a car (show the car keys) isn't appropriate. As we grow and mature our toys change and become more complex. Bible study is the same. People learn differently at differing ages. With young preschoolers we teach basic, simple Bible concepts and thoughts with age suitable application. As the child grows and is able to understand more, the concepts become more complex. That progression continues through middle school, high school, and each stage of adulthood. The goal is a plan for balanced spiritual development at each stage of life...from birth to heaven. An age suitable curriculum plan is necessary to engage students with biblical concepts appropriately throughout their "LifeSpan."*

3. INTRODUCE HEAR-KNOW-DO (10 min.)

Encourage participants to move into smaller groups of two or three (if possible, group teachers who teach children of similar ages). Give each group one of the toys you've gathered and

displayed. Ask them to share how that toy might help a person “hear,” help a person “know,” and help a person “do.” Allow for groups to respond.

Explain: *As childhood teachers our portion of the LifeSpan development is foundational. We help boys and girls “Hear” God’s Word in age suitable ways, “Know” God’s Word as appropriate for their ability to understand, and “Do” God Word by applying God’s Word to their lives in age suitable ways.*

4. SEARCH THE SESSION FOR HEAR-KNOW-DO (15 min.)

Instruct groups to consider next week’s session. Instruct participants to search their Leader Guides to find at least one instruction/activity that leads boys and girls to “Hear” God’s Word, to “Know” God’s Word, and to “Do” God’s Word.

Allow each group an opportunity to share their findings. Comment and guide as necessary.

5. LEVELS OF BIBLICAL LEARNING (15 min.)

Distribute copies of *Levels of Biblical Learning*. Explain: *This document provides us with visible milestones related to biblical knowledge, skills, and attitudes at the designated levels from birth through sixth grade. It’s a useful guide to anticipate at what age or point biblical concepts will be introduced. It also helps a teacher understand appropriate levels for teaching the 10 biblical concepts during the childhood years.*

Walk through the “God Cares for Me” concept area displayed on the document. Explain how the concept progresses as the child matures. Point out how individual sessions use appropriate activities encouraging children to Hear-Know-Do in age suitable ways.

Direct participants to find next week’s session overview page. Lead them to identify the “Level of Bible Learning” concept area that will be covered, the “Bible Passage” that will be studied, the “Bible Truth” that will be reinforced, and the “Life Application” statement that will be reinforced during that session.

6. CONCLUSION (5 min.)

Close with prayer. Thank God for the children we are privileged to teach. Ask God to help teachers use the information learned to better maximize their teaching opportunities within each stage moving toward spiritual transformation.