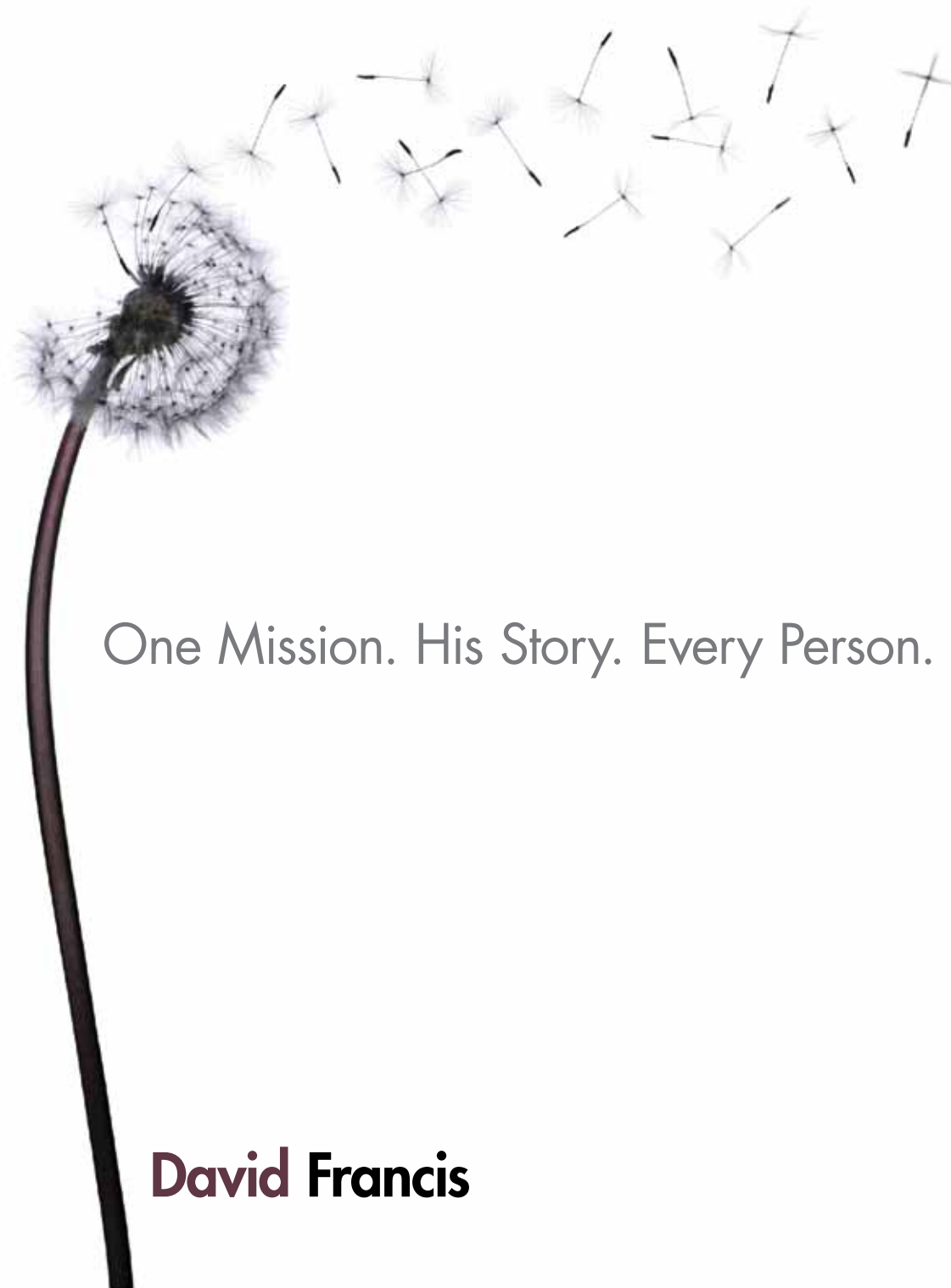


**Administrative Guide**

# **MISSIONARY** SUNDAY SCHOOL

**2012 SUNDAY SCHOOL EMPHASIS KIT**

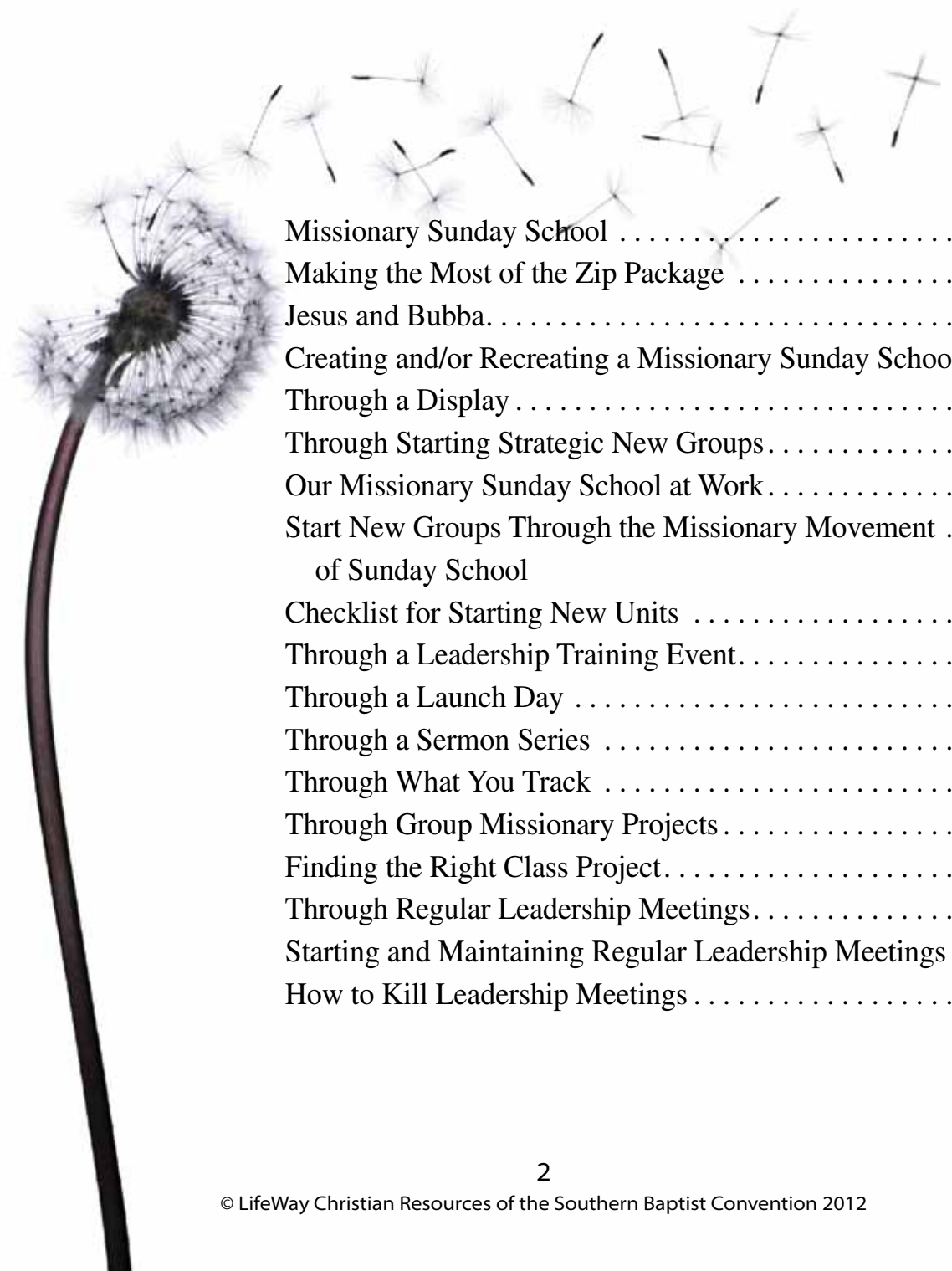


One Mission. His Story. Every Person.

**David Francis**

# MISSIONARY SUNDAY SCHOOL

## 2012 SUNDAY SCHOOL EMPHASIS KIT



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## Missionary Sunday School


What would happen if all the Sunday School classes in your church became missionaries?

Are you open to that possibility?

If you are, then be prepared for wonderful stories of lives impacted as classes embrace God's missionary mindset—moving stories of people changed as your church engages the community with the love of Jesus and His gospel.

## Making the Most of the Zip Package

- ✓ Don't be overwhelmed! We've packed a ton of ideas into this zip package. Take time to examine what's here and pick-and-choose to meet the needs of your congregation.
- ✓ There's a year's worth of ideas and information included. Don't try to use everything during one weekend event or even one month.
- ✓ As you work through Missionary Sunday School, use the files provided to enhance your own study. Develop a process for sharing the information with your Sunday School leaders.
- ✓ Every church is unique. Every leader is unique. Consider the files and information as a starting place. Make these resources your own.



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## Jesus and Bubba

Bubba was a rancher who raised horses. Everyone in the community respected him and counted him as a friend. He was nice enough, but he had no use for religion. Bubba told people that religion was for women, children, and men who needed a crutch. But that all changed when Mike, one of Bubba's adult sons, became involved in church and accepted Jesus as his Savior.

When Mike called to tell his dad, Bubba knew exactly what he needed to do: he would have to go to Mike and explain why he was making a mistake. To prepare for the meeting with his son, Bubba bought a Bible and read it from cover to cover. His intent was to find ways to show Mike the error of his ways.

However something unusual happened as Bubba read the Bible. God began to open his heart to the truth of the Gospel. Bubba went out to his field and asked God to help him understand. A local pastor was used by God to help Bubba understand what he was reading, and Bubba accepted Jesus. He became an active part of a Sunday School class and in time, became a Sunday School teacher, teaching from the same Bible God used to introduce Himself to Bubba.

Bubba now knows the truth that Jesus changes hearts and lives—including his own. He also knows that through the Bible, people discover Jesus. For Bubba, that is why everyone ought to be involved in a Bible study group.

When we talk about a missionary Sunday School, we're talking about a Bible study group that focuses on introducing people inside the group and outside the group to Jesus. What might a Sunday School\* look like if it saw itself as a missionary enterprise: thinking and acting out of a missionary mindset?

The very premise of this question will be jolting to some! Over the years, Sunday School has become almost synonymous with *Bible study*. Likewise, the most common word to describe Small Group has probably been *community*. Most Sunday School classes enjoy community, and most small groups enjoy Bible study. In fact, one of the modern names for Sunday School\* classes is Bible Fellowship Groups, a term that attempts to capture both of those ideas. It is the rare small group, class, or BFG, however, which discovers the joy of becoming a missionary enterprise.

### First Things First

Before we go too far in this, we might as well get it on the table. Read *Transformational Church* by Ed Stetzer and Thom Rainer. The information in this guide focuses on one of the elements identified in the Transformational Church research—a missionary mindset. If you have already read the book, review Chapter 3, “Missionary Mentality.” If you have not read the book, read it and pay particular attention to Chapter 3. Also read David Francis’ book, *Missionary Sunday School* (a free digital version is included in this zip package).

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\* For clarity, we'll use the term *Sunday School* throughout this guide when referring to the organization for ongoing group Bible study. Substitute whatever term your church uses for this organization.

## Creating and/or Recreating a Missionary Sunday School

The purpose of this administrative guide is to help you lead the Bible study groups in your church to. Some of the suggestions are easier than others. Some can work together. For example, a leadership training event could be conducted at the same time as a launch weekend. You will need to do what makes sense in your setting.

NOTE: None of the actions suggested can be completed overnight. It takes time to build a missionary Sunday School. Also these actions are not listed in a specific order. However, an explanation for why the action was included is given.

### Through a Display

***Well-done displays reinforce what you are communicating in action and spoken word. They serve as a reminder of what you are seeking to accomplish.***

A poster master is included in the file set. The central message of the poster is “I’m a Missionary!” Most copier machines are capable of printing an 11 x 17 poster. If you desire a larger poster size, take the file (MissionaryPoster.PDF) to a local printer. One possible display idea is to print multiple copies of the poster on 8.5 x 11 sheets of paper and arrange them around lettering of the words “I’m a Missionary!”

The display can be used to recognize individuals or groups as they make commitments to be a Missionary Sunday School class. Or use them to affirm individuals or groups who complete an action that reflects a Missionary Sunday School. Ask leaders and class members to write their names on the display or on cards added around the poster. You could also use photos, adding the photos of the individuals or groups to the display.

Here are some ideas of who could be recognized or affirmed:

- Leaders who commit to send out at least one person from their class this year
- Classes who commit to pray for new groups to be formed
- Leaders who commit to lead a group this year
- Classes that conduct at least one class project
- Classes that give birth to a new group
- A new group that was started

## Through Starting Strategic New Groups

***Starting new groups sets a climate for missionary activity.  
Starting new groups communicates an expectation that people are inviting  
others to be a part of an ongoing Bible study group. In order to make  
room for these new people, you have to start these new groups.***

New ongoing groups don't just happen. Planning, hard work, and execution of the plan are usually somewhere close by. The steps outlined below will help you be strategic in starting new classes. The process outlined will take a little time but it will be well worth the investment.

This process will involve four steps: defining where you are today, discovering the gaps, defining what you could be, and developing a plan. (Note: This process can be done for the entire organization or a single age-group or class.)

### Step 1 — Defining where you are today

This first step helps you get a picture of the present. Gather your Sunday School records and your church records. We realize it's not all about the numbers but remember each number represents a person. These are not imaginary figures but real people your church touches on a regular basis.

Using the records you have available, complete the following:

- Total number of groups or classes: \_\_\_\_\_
- Total number of leaders: \_\_\_\_\_
- Total number in attendance in a group or class (average): \_\_\_\_\_
- Total number enrolled in a group or class: \_\_\_\_\_
- Total number of church members: \_\_\_\_\_

Now time for some math.

- Divide the total number of classes by the total number of leaders.  
Enter that number here: \_\_\_\_\_ (leader ratio number).
- Divide the total in attendance by the total number enrolled.  
Enter that number here: \_\_\_\_\_ (attendance ratio number).
- Divide the total enrolled in a group by the total number of classes.  
Enter that number here: \_\_\_\_\_ (enrollment ratio number).
- Subtract the total number enrolled from the total number of church members.  
Enter the difference here: \_\_\_\_\_.

(Note: A form for recording this information is also included at the end of this file. You could complete that form and distribute it to your leaders if desired. )

## Step 2—Discovering the gaps

Now we move to the hard part: the possibilities. Begin by looking at the patterns of current classes. Create a list of Sunday School classes or ongoing Bible study groups in your church. Review the attendance records of each group (especially adult groups), looking for classes that have maintained the same attendance for the past 18 months. Place a P by that group (for *plateau*). Survey the list a second time and look for classes that are larger than 25 in average attendance. Mark those groups with L (for *large*). Review the list one more time, looking for classes that have decreased in average attendance by 20% or more over the past 18 months. Write N by those groups (for *needs help*).

### Insights to Note

1. Groups that are plateaued usually have been together for some time and it's hard for newcomers to break into these groups. The group may be welcoming to others, but it will be hard for a newcomer to catch up on shared experiences and relationships. The P classes indicate a place where you may need to start a new class to make it easier for new people to get involved.
2. The larger a group is the less likely there will be discussion during the group Bible study. Sheer size just will not allow it. It also becomes more difficult for the teacher to know the people in the group, and he or she becomes just a deliverer of content as opposed to a teacher who is connected to the learners. L may indicate a good class that has just grown beyond its ability to nurture spiritual transformation. It may be time for a new group to be formed with some of the people in that class being sent out to start the new one.
3. A group that is declining can result from a variety of issues: poor teaching, apathy, refusal to invite others, or conflicts. The list could go on. These classes could be creating gaps in your organization if they are the only group for that age or life-stage.

The second part of looking at the possibilities is looking at your community. Many city governments have census information to help you discover the groups of people that live around your church facilities. The goal is to look for groups your church could be reaching but currently are not.

Note: LifeWay Consulting offers a service called a Community Geo-demographic Correlation Analysis. This assessment goes well beyond census and lifestyle clustered data. This evaluation shows your church's growth potential in terms of who the people are, where they live, and what is projected to change in the next 5 years. (Visit [www.LifeWay.com/Consulting](http://www.LifeWay.com/Consulting) for more information and pricing.)

The last action for determining the possibilities is to begin asking some honest questions. Here are some questions to get you started (the list is not exhaustive):

- Whom in the community are we not reaching? Do we have a group or class just for them? What keeps us from reaching them, and how can we overcome that?
- What about a men only class or a women only class?



- Do we need a class for newlyweds or nearly-weds?
- Do we need a class for new parents?
- Are there people in the community who would benefit from these classes that are not currently being reached by our church?
- Who in our church membership is not a part of a class or group? What do we need to do to change that?
- What classes or groups need to be added that will place us in a better position to reach our community for Christ?

Obviously, you will need others to help you answer these questions. The more people involved in the process the greater the possibility of buy-in.

Using the list of current classes and the information you gathered above, identify the gaps in your ongoing Bible study groups. To the left of the current listed groups, list the gaps by target group (the group you could be reaching if you started a new ongoing group). Sample target groups might include a class for children who are bilingual, a Saturday student class held off-campus for those who work on Sunday, a class for men whose wives work in a Sunday School class, a newlyweds class, a class for parents of college students, a class for newly-blended families, a Single on Sundays class for women who come to Bible study without their husbands, or a class for first-time parents. The possibilities are endless!

### Step 3—Defining what you could be

- Count the total number of gap groups you identified. Record that number here: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Add the number of potential groups to the number of groups that already exist. Record the sum of that total here: \_\_\_\_\_ (potential total groups).
- As a rule of thumb, for every group you create, you will gain an average of 10 people in attendance within a year. Multiple the total number of new groups by 10. Enter that number here: \_\_\_\_\_ (projected growth)
- Add the potential growth number to the current average attendance. Record that number here: \_\_\_\_\_ (projected average attendance)
- Using the leader ratio number above, multiple the number of new groups by that ratio number. Enter the quotient here: \_\_\_\_\_ (new leaders needed)
- Add the new leaders needed to the number of current leaders. Enter the sum here: \_\_\_\_\_ (total leaders)
- Multiple the enrollment ratio number by the number of potential groups. Enter that number here: \_\_\_\_\_ (enrollment goal).  
(In most cases, for every three people newly enrolled, one will become a part of a group. Multiple the projected growth number by 3 and add that to your current enrollment figure.)



## Step 4—Developing a plan

Nothing you have done up to this point matters if you fail to create a plan and execute that plan.

Review the list of potential groups and classify them by priority, listing them as must-start, can-start, should-start, and could-start. Begin by focusing on the must-start and can-start groups. Inform key people of the need and initiate the leader recruitment process utilized by your church. Select the appropriate curriculum resource set for the group and secure the resources (you'll want these resources on hand as you recruit potential leaders for this group or groups). Evaluate how you currently utilize your space. Even if the new group meets off campus, you will still need to secure a site. Starting new groups will require some financial planning as well because in most settings, whatever the church provides to the current groups (curriculum, furnishings, teaching aids, etc.) will need to be offered to the new group(s).

As the must- and can- groups get started, turn your focus on the should-start and could-start groups. Repeat the steps outlined above to start these groups as well.

Write all the steps you and others will need to take for each group to get started. Use this document as a to-do list. Include target dates and who is responsible for each action.

You will need to evaluate the list of groups periodically to see if you need to add to or re-categorize the potential new groups. A should-start group may become a must-start group as needs are better understood and leaders are discovered.



# Our Missionary Sunday School at Work

## Where we are...

- Total number of groups or classes: \_\_\_\_\_
- Total number of leaders: \_\_\_\_\_
- Total number in attendance in a group or class (average): \_\_\_\_\_
- Total number enrolled in a group or class: \_\_\_\_\_
- Total number of church members: \_\_\_\_\_

## Time for some math...

- Divide the total number of classes by the total number of leaders.  
Enter that number here: \_\_\_\_\_ (leader ratio number).
- Divide the total in attendance by the total number enrolled.  
Enter that number here: \_\_\_\_\_ (attendance ratio number).
- Divide the total enrolled in a group by the total number of classes.  
Enter that number here: \_\_\_\_\_ (enrollment ratio number).
- Subtract the total number enrolled from the total number of church members.  
Enter the difference here: \_\_\_\_\_.

## Where we could be...

- Count the total number of gap groups you identified. Record that number here: \_\_\_\_\_.
- Add the number of potential groups to the number of groups that already exist.  
Record the sum of that total here: \_\_\_\_\_ (potential total groups).
- As a rule of thumb, for every group you create, you will gain an average of 10 people in attendance within a year. Multiple the total number of new groups by 10.  
Enter that number here: \_\_\_\_\_ (projected growth)
- Add the potential growth number to the current average attendance.  
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- Using the leader ratio number above, multiple the number of new groups by that ratio number.  
Enter the quotient here: \_\_\_\_\_ (new leaders needed)
- Add the new leaders needed to the number of current leaders.  
Enter the sum here: \_\_\_\_\_ (total leaders)
- Multiple the enrollment ratio number by the number of potential groups.  
Enter that number here: \_\_\_\_\_ (enrollment goal).  
(In most cases, for every three people newly enrolled, one will become a part of a group.  
Multiple the projected growth number by 3 and add that to your current enrollment figure.)

## Start New Groups Through the Missionary Movement of Sunday School

What comes to mind when you hear the word “missionary”? Far away places? Strange customs? Unfamiliar languages? Sunday School?

Sunday School may seem out of place in that list, but *missionary* is at the heart of Sunday School. You don’t have to cross a border or an ocean to be a missionary. In fact, if you are a member of Sunday School, you are part of a 300-year-old missionary movement.

In the 2011 book *Transformational Church Goes to Sunday School*, David Francis reminded his readers that the Sunday School movement began in Gloucester, England, through the efforts of Robert Raikes. Raikes had been deeply moved by the plight of hundreds of young children who worked in factories six days a week. He wanted to help them achieve a better life and climb out of their poverty by teaching them to read. Their only day off was Sunday. He established a “Sunday School” and enrolled children in classes where they learned to read . . . and the Bible was their textbook. The missionary movement known as Sunday School was born.

Sunday School as a missionary movement didn’t stop there. During the early days of the United States, Sunday School missionaries traveled from town to town establishing a Sunday School in each community they visited. Those early Sunday Schools were typically non-denominational, and people of all ages were invited to study the Bible.

Some time in the past, a person (or a group of people) established the Sunday School you are attending. Their goal was to reach people of all ages for Bible study. As a result, you became part of a 300-year-old missionary movement . . . and you can be a “Sunday School missionary” to others, too. Just like present-day missionaries who travel to foreign countries to reach a specific people group, your Sunday School has a variety of classes designed to reach specific kinds of people such as children, students, single adults, married adults, senior adults, and probably many more. Through prayer, reflection, and planning you can identify people who don’t currently have a place to fit in your Sunday School (perhaps there is no class for them or there is no room in existing classes). When you identify those unreached people, pray about your part in reaching them, and start new classes designed to reach them specifically, you are being intentionally missional, carrying on a great Sunday School heritage. You have become a Sunday School missionary.

Missionaries leave behind the comforts of home in order to reach people who have not heard the gospel, do not own a Bible, and have not connected to God in a personal relationship. Missionaries often leave behind people they love in order to be obedient to Christ as they seek to expand the Kingdom of God; they follow Christ’s command to “go and make disciples” in a tangible way.

Being a missionary who travels to foreign countries is not too different from you and me becoming Sunday School missionaries. If we take our role as Sunday School missionaries seriously, we'll find ourselves leaving our comfortable, familiar classrooms in order to start new classes. We'll leave behind people we've come to know and love in order to reach new people and expand the Kingdom of God.

Are there people on your class ministry list you never see? Start a new class to reach them. Are there people who attend worship but don't fit into your current Sunday School? Start a new class for them. Are there people living around your church who never attend? Begin a new class for them. When you think strategically and act missionally, you become part of the greatest 300-year-old missionary movement the world has ever known: Sunday School! Talk with your pastor or staff leader this week about ways you and your class can become Sunday School missionaries.

---

Ken Braddy is Managing Director of Leadership and Adult Publishing at LifeWay Christian Resources and has served churches for over 18 years as a minister of education.



## Checklist for Starting New Units

- ❑ ***Establish an understanding of the ultimate purpose of Sunday School and open evangelistic Bible study units.***

Sunday School is the foundational strategy in a local church for leading people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for building on-mission Christians through open Bible study groups that engage believers in evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship.

The tension in creating new units is the tension between creating new classes and restructuring relationships in existing units. The only way to deal effectively with this tension is by coming to a decision about the ultimate purpose of Sunday School. The purpose of a New Testament church is to reach people for Christ. Historically Sunday School has proven to be an effective means for enabling a church to accomplish this divine mandate. The life transforming Bible study that takes place in a Sunday School class becomes the means of reaching people for Christ.

- ❑ ***Build an awareness of the value of new units.***
  - Pastoral messages from the pulpit
  - Articles in church paper and on church Web site
  - Stories of successful new units and stories of individuals reached through new units
  - Testimonies of the leaders and members
  - Celebration of the success of new units
  - Statistical reports that show the difference new units have made
  - Messages that emphasize starting new units are about those outside the church that need to be reached for Christ
- ❑ ***Train and educate your leaders and members in the value and process for starting new units.***
  - How a proper organization can influence growth and effective teaching
  - The value of new units
  - The process for starting new units
  - Training and equipping new leaders for the new units
- ❑ ***Study your Sunday School organization.***
  - Sunday School Planning Team studies the Sunday School organization.
  - The results of the study are presented to the Sunday School leadership team.
  - Identify areas where new units are needed by identifying:
    - Classes or departments that exceed suggested enrollment ceilings
    - Age ranges and life transition stages (newly married, recently divorced, widowed, college students, etc.) that are not being reached effectively

- Areas with lots of prospects but little attendance
- Classes where the space is continually filled
- Special needs: mentally handicapped, physically handicapped
- Homebound, shift workers
- Opportunities for new units in other locations: homes, apartments, offices, recreational sites, residential institutions

☐ ***Identify a target group.***

☐ ***Discuss the need with Sunday School leaders.***

☐ ***Seek sponsorship.***

- Find a class (or two classes that are willing to work together) that will sponsor a new unit. Provide leadership for it. The existing class can help a new unit start strong by visiting, enrolling, ministering, and other support.

☐ ***Enlist and build a leadership team for Adult units (\*denotes core).***

- Teacher\* \_\_\_\_\_
- Class Administrator\* \_\_\_\_\_
- Member\* \_\_\_\_\_
- Member\* \_\_\_\_\_
- Member \_\_\_\_\_
- Member \_\_\_\_\_

☐ ***Provide needed space, equipment, and resources to the leadership team.***

- Determine meeting location and room.
- Determine equipment needed and make arrangements for the equipment.
- Order curriculum resources for teacher and members.
- Provide curriculum materials to the teacher.
- Set up the room and prepare for the first session.

☐ ***Promote the start date and location to the target group.***

- Start date determined \_\_\_\_\_
- Location determined \_\_\_\_\_
- Promotion actions planned
- Promotion actions carried out

☐ ***Visit, invite, and enroll members.***

- Gather names of prospects.
- Assign prospective members for contact.

- Contact prospective members.
- Invite prospective members to enroll.
- Make other contacts with prospective members using: calls, cards, letters, e-mails,
- fellowships, dinners, informal gatherings.

❑ ***Establish an open group mindset as the new group is established.***

- Ongoing and evangelistic
- Intentional mix of lost and saved people
- Quality, life-altering Bible study
- New members may join anytime
- Intentional focus on teaching to guide toward conversion and assimilation into the church
- Sends members out into service

❑ ***Plan and conduct the first session.***

- Plan. Well in advance of the first session plan what is going to take place during the session.
- Praise. Ask some leaders and members to tell how they understand that God is working in their lives, read a psalm or other Scripture passage that will be part of the Bible study for the day, and provide music or brief group singing.
- Prayer time can be a vital group-building experience as well as a meaningful time of worship.
- Participate in Bible study. Approximately two thirds of the total session should be designed for Bible study.
- Enlist people for the various parts of the first session.
- Provide greeters, registration materials, nametags, and member curriculum for the first session
- (and other sessions).
- Conduct the first session.

❑ ***Continue to support the new unit***

Pray for the new unit.

- Lead the sponsoring group to continue to help build the class by supporting it in visitation,
- enrolling people, and ministry.
- Continue to mentor and support the leadership of the new unit.
- Plan with the leadership of the new unit for the next steps for the new unit and the support that is needed.
- Make the church aware of the progress of the new unit.



- ❑ *Establish an understanding that at the appropriate time and size in the future the new unit will begin a new unit.*
- ❑ *Pray. This is not on the list of things to do because it is something else to do. Prayer should permeate everything we do as we evaluate the need for new units, begin new units, and as the new units do their work.*

---

Adapted from *Handbook for Starting New Bible Study Units*, LifeWay Christian Resources, 2004. Used by permission.



## Through a Leadership Training Event

*An annual training event for all Sunday School leaders can help your church and Sunday School take strides toward being a missionary enterprise. You are reminding them of what is important and defining their work by the conference content presented.*

### Preparation for a training event

The zip package you downloaded contains a complete set of conference plans (including handouts and PowerPoint® presentations) to help you. Plans are included for preschool leaders, children leaders, student leaders, adult leaders, general officers, and all leaders together. If you provide a general training for all age-group leaders together, use the All Leaders Together plan and provide a copy of the appropriate age-group plan to each teacher in that age grouping.

The schedule for each church will be unique; it all depends on the needs of your leaders. Friday evening and Saturday mornings are the most common times for training events. Some churches have used Sunday mornings after worship or Sunday evenings. You know your church better than anyone; select a time when the majority of your leaders could participate. Provide plenty of advanced notice so they can plan accordingly. Nothing beats a personal invitation and the best invitation is friend-to-friend. Contact all leaders either in person or by phone to invite them to this training.

Provide for the childcare needs of your leaders. Partner with another church (providing childcare for them at another time), enlist parents not working in Sunday School, or secure paid workers. Do everything possible to insure that the people who normally work with preschoolers and children can attend the training.

Keep in mind the costs involved in doing a training event. Consider asking classes to provide different food dishes as acts of appreciation. If you invite conference leaders, agree ahead of time on travel arrangements and honorariums. Some churches in neighboring cities partner with each other, one providing leaders for a conference one weekend and the other returning the favor the next weekend. Contact your local associational office and ask for ideas or assistance. Remember the key to quality training is enlisting quality conference leaders. You may cut corners in some areas but enlist great conference leaders. Recruit them early and provide the appropriate conference plans from the zip package.

Begin the training with introductions and a brief ice-breaker. Direct leaders to share with others about a time in their lives when they felt like a missionary or did the work of a missionary in some way.

Dismiss leaders for the training. At the end of the conference time, bring everyone together for a time of commitment and prayer. Invite leaders to commit to doing their part to make your Sunday School a missionary enterprise by asking them to attach their name tags around the focal display. Use the time to share plans for starting new groups. Communicate the potential average attendance once the groups are added, interpreting the larger number in terms of the church touching more lives in the community.

If your church has completed the Transformational Church Assessment, this would be a great time to reveal the findings of that assessment (for more information about the assessment and pricing, check out [www.TransformationalChurch.com](http://www.TransformationalChurch.com)).

Be sure to have copies of *Missionary Sunday School* to distribute to all leaders. The book is available four ways: 1) Print copies from the zip package you downloaded or download the file from [www.LifeWay.com/DavidFrancis](http://www.LifeWay.com/DavidFrancis). 2) E-mail the PDF file to your leaders. 3) Visit [www.LifeWay.com/DavidFrancis](http://www.LifeWay.com/DavidFrancis) and order print copies of the book for \$1.50 each. 4) Visit [www.LifeWay.com/DavidFrancis](http://www.LifeWay.com/DavidFrancis), download the eBook version (free) and send it to your leaders (they will need an eBook reader on their computer or other electronic device).



## Potential Training Schedules

### 3-hour schedule

- Mingle, Ice-breaker (serve snacks)
- Welcome, Introductions (15 minutes)
- I'm a Missionary (15 minutes)
- Age group training, Session 1 (1 hour)
- Break with snacks (15 minutes)
- Age group training, Session 2 (1 hour)
- Commitment and Prayer (15 minutes)
- Dismiss, Fellowship

### 3 ½ hour schedule

Friday or Sunday beginning with dinner

- Welcome, Introductions (10 minutes)
- Dinner and Ice-breaker (35 minutes)
- I'm a Missionary (15 minutes)
- Age group training, Session 1 (1 hour)
- Break with snacks (15 minutes)
- Age group training, Session 2 (1 hour)
- Commitment and Prayer (15 minutes)
- Dismiss, Fellowship (dessert served)

### Saturday morning ending with lunch

- Mingle, Ice-breaker (snacks optional)
- Welcome, Introductions (15 minutes)
- I'm a Missionary (15 minutes)
- Age group training, Session 1 (1 hour)
- Break with snacks (15 minutes)
- Age group training, Session 2 (1 hour)
- Commitment and Prayer (15 minutes)
- Lunch (30 minutes)
- Dismiss

### Saturday morning beginning with breakfast

- Welcome, Introductions (10 minutes)
- Breakfast and Ice-breaker (35 minutes)
- I'm a Missionary (15 minutes)
- Age group training, Session 1 (1 hour)
- Break with snacks (15 minutes)
- Age group training, Session 2 (1 hour)
- Commitment and Prayer (15 minutes)
- Dismiss



## Through a Launch Day

***Sunday School Launch Day offers a natural starting point for a new Sunday School year. This is usually the day preschoolers, children, and students advance to the next grade in Sunday School. A Launch Day is also a natural way to start new adult classes and encourage people who may have dropped out of Sunday School to get a fresh start.***

1. To get ready for a Launch Day, identify new classes that need to be established, leadership needs, and how to accommodate all the classes in the future.
2. Enlist leaders for the new classes and replace leaders who choose to no longer serve. Clearly communicate expectations up front.
3. After people have been enlisted, prepare both new and experienced teachers for the new year. Lead the way in cleaning classroom space and repairing/replacing equipment as needed.
4. Assist new leaders in communicating. Children and their parents need to know who their new teachers will be, where they will meet, and when. Adults will need information about the new classes and who they are for. Encourage leaders to call,
5. or better yet, make a personal visit to everyone on their ministry list before the
6. Launch Day.
7. Conduct Launch Day. Be sure to have extra greeters to help people find their new classes. Do all you can to make this a great experience for all who attend.
8. Evaluate what you did. Learn from it. Make corrections for the future as needed.

## Through a Sermon Series

***The pastor must lead the way if the Sunday School is to become a missionary enterprise. A sermon series allows him to reset the culture and interpret the importance of being missionaries.***

Create a sermon series that calls for the missionary action you are seeking to lead your church toward. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- 2 Kings 7:1-20: The four lepers tell the city what they found and the city is saved from sure death.
- Luke 10:1-12: Jesus sent out the 70, giving them the same task as He gave the disciples.
- Acts 13:1-3: After praying, the church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas out as missionaries.
- 1 Corinthians 16:19: Paul acknowledged his friends and coworkers, Aquilla and Priscilla, who had established a church in their house.



## Through What You Track

***What we track (and report) communicates what is really important.  
Tracking actions that reflect a missionary mindset only reinforces that mindset.  
Tracking also serves as a form of accountability.***

Begin to track (record and report) different activities by individuals and groups that represent a missionary Sunday School. These could be tracked within a group, for individuals, or both.

When identifying the actions, focus on things you control. For example, you can control the number of times the gospel is presented; you cannot control the number of times people accept the gospel.

Here is a list of possible actions to consider tracking:

- Number of times individuals engaged in a spiritual conversation
- Number of contacts made by a group (weekly)
- Number of people involved in a mission project
- Number of classes or groups involved in a mission project
- Number of new groups started in 12 month time period

Once you have settled on the actions you will track, determine the best way to collect and report the information. You may want to add a section to the class attendance reporting system or create a special form just for the actions you are tracking. Communicate the action to be tracked, why it is being tracked, how the information will be gathered, and what will be done with the information. In some cases, you may need to define the action (what qualifies as a spiritual conversation, what is a contact, what counts as a mission project, etc.).

## Through Group Missionary Projects

***Missionary Sunday School classes are groups that go do the work of a missionary. In most cases, parties will be planned without the leader's encouragement. The same is not true for missionary projects.  
You must lead the way or it won't happen.***

There are five things you will need to do to get your groups involved in missionary projects.

First, encourage classes to find a project. (Check out the information on pp. 22-23.)

Remember: a mission project can take place across the street as well as across the world.

Second, dedicate resources to the projects. You may need to provide childcare, financial support, and clear dates on the church calendar (time is a resource).

Third, organize for the project. Each class will need a person responsible for leading a project. You may also recruit a person to give leadership to projects for the entire organization. This person would work with the class leaders in finding appropriate projects and helping them coordinate their work.

Fourth, recognize the work done. As classes plan and complete projects, find ways of recognizing them in an appropriate way. Creating a project display with photos, public announcements, and thank you certificates could be utilized.

And fifth, participate yourself. If you as the leader are involved in selected projects along the way, you have credibility to ask others to do the same. You earn the right to lead them to engage in mission action by engaging in it yourself.

## **Finding the Right Class Project**

When most of us think about a class project, the first that seems to always come to mind is working in a local soup kitchen or on a Habitat for Humanity project. While there is certainly nothing wrong with these projects, there are many more possibilities if we just look.

The first step is to get organized. Enlist someone in the class to lead the way. Having a person who is officially assigned the task communicates intentionality. This person has to have some organizational skills and a heart for people.

A second step is to understand who is in the class. The project leader will want to make a list of who can do what. Knowing this will help you and the project leader eliminate some potential projects. If there are no carpenters in the class, then there is no need to look for projects that require carpentry skills. You want to utilize the skills and interests in the class.

The third step is to discover the possibilities. Begin with the class members. Ask them to list possible things they would like to do in your community. Ask them to describe the needs they would like to meet in their community. You may even ask what role they would see themselves playing in meeting the described needs.

You will also want to scan the community for potential projects as well. Every community has different needs and opportunities. There are some general places you can begin to look that will get you on the right path.



***Here are a few ideas:***

- Hospitals—While some may want to become “official volunteers,” there are other projects to take on. Talk to the hospital administration about the needs of their staff, especially during holidays. Look for ways of supporting and encouraging those who work during holidays.
- Local Schools—Contact local school administrators and look for ways your class could volunteer. You might adopt a classroom and provide extra supplies for kids in need. Don’t forget to look for ways to encourage the teachers. Some classes could come together and provide a thank you meal or snack on occasion.
- Local colleges and/or universities—Many Baptist Collegiate Ministry centers provide meals and other support for students through the year, usually through volunteers.
- Public servants—Your local police and fire department personnel are always on duty. Your class could adopt a precinct or firehouse, doing special things for them through the year.
- Community organizations/events—Many organizations in your community depend upon volunteers to survive. Special Olympics, sports leagues, after-school programs, adopt-a-highway programs, annual parades, Red Cross, and other groups could use your help.
- Counseling centers and support groups—Abortion alternatives, financial help, grief support, cancer support, and drug rehab centers are all looking for quality volunteers.

Be aware that there may be some training involved in some of these projects. Most organizations will help you get the training needed or at least point you in the right direction. There may be background checks involved in some cases as well. Make sure you meet the expectations of any group with whom you are partnering. If the organization is a faith-based organization, you will also want to make sure that their beliefs and practices are in line with your church’s beliefs.

The fourth step is to select a project. It would be best to do one or two well than to do several poorly. Look for the project or projects that best suits the skills, interests, and personality of your class. Include the class in the decision, presenting them with two or three options. Be sure to explain the expectations for each project and why that one was selected as a potential project.

After the choice is made, it’s time to get after it. Seek to fulfill the requirements of the project with excellence. Remind class members that they are doing this project as a means of representing Christ in your community. When asked about why you are doing these things, explain that you are doing it because of the difference Jesus has made in your life.

Be sure to take photos of the project and create a display in your classroom. These photos will become a reminder of what your class can do in the community and help launch future projects.

## Through Regular Leadership Meetings

***Research indicates that a growing Sunday School (one that is missionary minded), provides at least quarterly training for leaders. Training does not guarantee success, but failing to train does guarantee failure.***

***Utilizing your current weekly or monthly leadership meetings gives you a consistent way of reminding your leaders of what a Missionary Sunday School looks like.***

If you don't currently have regular leadership meetings, the ideas found in this kit could help you start and establish these valuable meetings. Ten ideas for each age-group—adults, students, childhood, and all leaders—have been developed for you to use in your leadership meetings. These can be done on consecutive weeks or months, depending upon your need. You can use the ideas for 10 consecutive weeks, for 10 consecutive months with your current approach being used the other weeks of the month, or for 10 consecutive months if you have meetings once a month. (If you choose to conduct monthly meetings, the suggestion is to use the December meeting for a Christmas celebration for the leaders and July as a recognition time with a picnic. Of course, you could also take a break those months because of busy schedules during those times.) The agendas provided can be done in any order and are included in the zip package.



## Starting and Maintaining Regular Leadership Meetings\*

We expect our local schools to conduct faculty meetings. In those meetings, leaders plan, organize, and improve upon what they do. Most of us would think it odd or unacceptable if we found out the schools our children attend never had a faculty meeting. Some of us might even contact the school and ask them to explain why these meetings weren't taking place. Our expectation is that teachers and leaders need to plan, organize, and improve.

In that same vein, we should expect our Sunday School leaders to plan, organize, and improve. If faculty meetings are a part of making that happen in our local schools, then shouldn't regular leadership meetings be a part of making those same things happen in Sunday School? If we are going to move toward excellence in Sunday School, then we must give regular leadership meetings priority.

Before we move on, let's be clear about one thing: We aren't talking about meetings for the sake of having meetings. That would be a waste of time for everyone. We're talking about purposeful meetings on a regular basis that advance the work of your church's Sunday School.

### Steps to Starting an Ongoing Leadership Meeting

#### ***1. Discuss the need with key leaders.***

Talk with the pastor, church staff, the Sunday School director, and other key leaders about the need for conducting regular leadership meetings. Highlight the goals you have and invite them to add additional insights and goals as well. Discuss the need with key teachers, especially those who are respected by the other leaders. Investing in these discussions will help you shape and define the meetings in the future.

#### ***2. Decide on a name.***

In the title of this article, we included an asterisk (\*). We had to call it something to communicate so we chose meeting. Choose a name that works for your church and its leaders. Carefully weigh the naming options for this regular gathering of leaders in your church. Meeting, Training, LeaderTime, Assembly, and a host of other names could be used. There are pros and cons to any name but chose a name that communicates the value of the activity it represents.

#### ***3. Plan for it in the church budget.***

There will be some expenses, so plan ahead. The expenses may include snacks and beverages, books for study, and resources used to conduct the meetings. Make sure that the expenses you anticipate are in line with the purposes of the meetings and be a good steward of the resources available.

#### ***4. Determine how often.***

Different churches do different things. Some meet weekly. Some meet monthly. Some meet quarterly. Some churches conduct a monthly meeting time for all leaders and then hold that time on the other weeks for divisions, departments, and classes to meet. The size of the organization and what you want to accomplish will impact this decision. And remember it's not about what they will give to you (how much time), but rather what you will give to them (value proposition that you can consistently deliver). It's better to do monthly meetings well than to do weekly meetings poorly.

#### ***5. Determine who should be there.***

In most churches, all the Sunday School leadership should attend these meetings. Some churches limit attendance to the general officers, department leaders, and class teachers. Once again, this decision is a reflection of what you want to accomplish. Recruit leaders with the expectation that they will attend the regular meetings.

#### ***6. Determine the best time.***

People are busy and usually your leaders are the busiest. Find a time that makes sense and work from there. If it's a luncheon following worship service on the second Sunday of each month, then go with it. Ask the leaders to identify the time that would be best for them. Just find a time and stick to it.

#### ***7. Determine the best place.***

Secure a place big enough to hold the group comfortably. Make it the best possible space for the size of group anticipated.

#### ***8. Get the meetings on the church calendar.***

Once you have a time and a place, make sure to protect that time by following the church process for adding these regular meetings to the church calendar. This is one way to protect the meetings and minimize scheduling conflicts.

#### ***9. Plan the meetings in advance.***

Identify a major focus for each meeting—any action that strengthens your Sunday School. Consider these ideas for starters: teaching tips, strengthening class discussion, being guest-friendly, organizing for effective prayer, adopting a class mission project, using nametags effectively, encouraging class members to invite unchurched friends, establishing care groups, starting a new class, helping class members serve. (Check this zip package for ten sets of Leadership Meeting Agendas; each set includes ideas for childhood leaders, student leaders, adult leaders, and all leaders together.)

#### ***10. Personally invite every leader.***

Send letters, cards, e-mails, and make public announcements as secondary invitations but nothing beats a person-to-person invitation (either by phone or by visiting). This takes time—but it will be worth it until you get the regular meetings established.

***11. Conduct the first meeting and gather feedback.***

The first meeting must be worth the leaders' effort. Plan every minute of the meeting and avoid the dreaded "Meeting Killers" (see the article on pp. 28-30). Focus on those who ARE there and invest in them.

***12. Get better.***

Ask for feedback so you can improve. Provide an index card and ask them to share ideas, needs, and issues. (Tip: If you don't require them to sign the card, you usually get more honest feedback.) Act on what you learn and begin to work on the next meeting.



# How to Kill Leadership Meetings

There are many ways to kill a Sunday School leadership meeting. You don't even have to try! Unfortunately, some of the things listed below come from experience. They're not badges worn with pride but lessons learned the hard way. They are shared with the hope that you won't make the same mistakes. Along with this list, we've added some solutions to help keep these nasty assassins at bay.

## **Wing it.**

They know when you are on autopilot. Become the expert as best you can before the meeting. Read what the experts say about the topic of the meeting, even if you disagree with them. Use quotes from those you disagree with to foster discussion. The leaders who attend your meetings are the frontline people and they deserve your best effort.

## **Do all the talking.**

It is funny how we complain about teachers who only lecture—then we turn around and lecture! Allow and invite participants to ask questions and interact with the information themselves. We usually don't allow people to ask questions when we fail to prepare (lowers the risk of them asking something we don't know...or didn't take the time to know).

## **Start late.**

Nothing screams “unimportant” like starting late. Make every minute count, especially the first one. If you have to get there 30 minutes early to make sure you can start on time, then do it. These are the people who will determine if your Sunday School succeeds or fails; give them priority. This also gives you the opportunity to model for the leaders the expectation you have for them: to start their classes on time every Sunday.

## **Read from your notes.**

Find a way to do more than read your notes. Memorize them word for word if you have to. It's great to have notes—just don't read them. (Bonus: I prefer handwritten notes to typed notes. There is no doubt that they are yours and not someone else's thoughts or ideas you are borrowing. This is a subtle way of communicating that you have prepared.)

## **Serve leftover snacks.**

If you are providing snacks, make sure they are fresh and for this vital group of Sunday School leaders. Serving leftovers only communicates that the leaders don't deserve the best. (And they will find out they had leftovers no matter how hard you try to hide it.)

## **Complain.**

These leaders are not giving up their time to hear you complain and gripe. They are there to be encouraged, challenged, and improved. These meetings are not about you.

### **Pour on the Syrup.**

That's a nice way of saying "sugar-coating reality." The leaders know what is working well and what is not. In fact, they probably know better than you do. Be honest about the issues and challenges that must be addressed. Use the leadership meeting to find solutions. Leave the syrup in the pantry.

### **Preach.**

The regular leadership meeting is not another preaching service. It is a time to plan, organize, and improve. Confusing the two will be a sure fire way of killing future meetings.

### **Preview the Lesson.**

Simply previewing next week's lesson will not work over the long haul. There are enough resources available to help teachers prepare a lesson. They need to know how to use the resources your church provides and what they can do to be a better Bible student, teacher, and leader. Too often, administrators do this because we either think our leaders are incapable (we become an enabler for those who are too lazy to study) or because we want to control the actual words shared.

### **Do (or tell them the) same thing as last time.**

It is easy to get stuck in a pattern. Keep the notes from previous meetings and look for patterns developing. Do all you can to make each meeting unique in some way.

### **Cancel meetings.**

There are some things that can't be avoided, but getting in the habit of canceling regular meetings will eventually kill the meetings. In extreme circumstances (weather, tragedies), you might want to postpone a regular meeting instead of canceling it.

### **Make it a distribution point for forms and study notes.**

If you could have sent the information by e-mail, then send it by e-mail. While some forms will be distributed during a leadership meeting, use the time to discuss the value of the form and ways the process supported by the form can be strengthened. You may even give them the opportunity to shape the form, especially if they are the ones who will be using it.

### **Focus on only what makes the organization better.**

The people there want the church to succeed, but they are really interested in being a part of that success. Find ways to make what is being discussed or shared relevant to their work or ministry. If it only relates to your work, then share it in another forum. This meeting is about them succeeding.

### **Show a lack of enthusiasm.**

Many regular leadership meetings are scheduled on Wednesday nights—after people have worked hard all day. To come to something at church that is boring simply puts them to sleep. Be excited about being there and investing in the lives of these choice leaders.



## Be PowerPoint-dependent.

Use media in the meetings but don't become dependent upon it. Make sure the presentations you create support you—not replace you. Become a student of communication and get better every time you lead a meeting. The leaders are there to be trained and led by YOU, not your media screen.

We get confused sometimes and think Sunday School leadership meetings are about the organization and helping the church (and us) accomplish the task (code for reaching my goals). Think about what an effective, challenging meeting could mean to the leaders. They get encouraged in their work (it isn't always easy on the front lines). They hear how others are making it happen in their class (iron sharpens iron). They get fed (they spend most of their time feeding others). They get prayed for (they usually are the one praying for their class). They feel connected (we are in this together). They want to get better at what they do (doing it better than the last time is a great motivator). They can own the solution (how can WE make this work in our church). If you focus on these things and invest in the lives of the leaders, you'll see the Sunday School Leadership meeting as a tool for fulfilling your call as a leader.

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By G. Dwayne McCrary, Editorial Project Leader at LifeWay Christian Resources. Dwayne teaches an adult Sunday School class in the church. He has served on church staff for 23 years. He has seen both the good and the bad of regular leadership meetings from both sides of the podium.

