

## **Leadership Meeting Agenda**

### **Using the Learner Guide as a Ministry Tool—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. Pay careful attention to “The Bible: The Textbook of Sunday School” (pp. 22-23) and “Nurture or Evangelism?” (p. 28).
- Become familiar with the Learner Guides used in the various classes within your Sunday School organization.

#### **Provide the following resources:**

- Nametags, markers, large sheets of paper
- CD or MP3 player and Christian praise music
- Copies of *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis for each participant (available as a free download at [www.lifeway.com/davidfrancis](http://www.lifeway.com/davidfrancis))
- Learner Guides used in the various classes within your Sunday School organization

#### **Display the following resources:**

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis
- Learner Guides used in the various classes within your Sunday School organization

#### **Prepare the room for learning:**

- Arrange chairs in groups of three. Place nametags and markers on a table near the entrance. Place a large sheet of paper and marker in the center of each group.
- Have Christian praise music playing in the background.

#### **PRESENT:**

##### **1. INTRODUCTION (15 min.)**

Greet participants and ask them to complete and wear a nametag. Direct them to sit in groups of three with other leaders who work in the same age group (children, students, or adults).

Share with the group that today’s session will focus on the use of the Learner Guide as a ministry tool. State that one of the most recognized uses of the Learner Guide is for members to study the lesson before class. When learners are familiar with the Bible text and the key points of the lesson in advance, they can begin to contemplate the truths of the lesson before class and be more fully engaged in the learning experience and lesson application during class.

Guide teachers to explore the value class members receive by using the Learner Guide as a means of helping them benefit from the Bible study during the actual group Bible study experience. Lead the group to identify ways the Learner Guide can help the class become better missionaries (helps the learner see how God was working in the lives of people in Bible times and how He can work in our lives, helps the learner personalize and apply the truths of the Bible study, helps the learner contemplate how to live out the truths of the Bible lesson, etc.).

## **2. THE BIBLE: THE TEXTBOOK OF SUNDAY SCHOOL (10 min.)**

Direct the group to “The Bible: The Textbook of Sunday School” in *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis (pp. 22-23). Highlight the fact that Bible study is the centerpiece of Sunday School. Emphasize the “why” of Bible study (“In a missionary Sunday School class, the purpose of Bible study is to equip members to be...well, missionaries!”).

Ask: *What is the difference in teaching for biblical information and teaching to produce missionaries? When you consider your class members, what is your teaching goal?* (Possible responses: They experience a fresh walk with the Lord, they fulfill the Lord’s purposes for their lives, they leave the class to help teach in another area within the church, they help start some new classes so the Sunday School can continue to grow, etc.) The Learner Guide can help the teacher accomplish their teaching goals.

## **3. NURTURE OR EVANGELISM (25 min.)**

Ask the small groups to read “Nurture or Evangelism?” on page 28 in *Missionary Sunday School*. Instruct each group to make a list on a large sheet of paper, identifying the three purposes of Sunday School listed in the paragraph (disciple those already in the church, assimilate new members, reach out to the unchurched).

Instruct group members to review their age group Learner Guides to see how they can help their members accomplish the Sunday School purposes. Ask each group to identify which of the three Sunday School purposes is regularly accomplished through their class. Allow each group to share. Guide the discussion toward positive outcomes for the classes and the Sunday School.

Allow groups to suggest class activities that will result in Sunday School mission actions (class identifies the need(s) of people, enlists members to perform mission actions to support the class project, agrees on a time frame for the mission project, seeks opportunities to share a verbal witness for Christ, seeks to involve the mission recipients in the Sunday School/church, and celebrates the way the Lord worked in the mission project). Encourage teachers who work with students, children, and preschool to consider appropriate actions for their groups.

Ask: *What activities are your class members involved in that show they are missionaries to people outside the church?* Suggest ways the Learner Guide can help class members be better missionaries.

## **4. CONCLUSION (5 min.)**

Lead the participants to consider and endorse the value Learner Guides can have for the class session and for class members. Based on truths learned in today’s session, ask teachers to share their plans to make better use of Learner Guides with their class members in the days ahead.

## **Leadership Meeting Agenda**

### **Using the Learner Guide as a Ministry Tool—Adults**

#### **Prepared by:**

David Apple, Adult Ministry Specialist, Leadership and Evangelism Training and Events  
Department, LifeWay Christian Resources

#### **PREPARE:**

##### **Provide the following resources:**

- Nametags, markers, pencils, large sheets of paper
- Copies of *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis (available as a free download at [www.lifeway.com/davidfrancis](http://www.lifeway.com/davidfrancis))
- Sample of Adult Learner Guides (Encourage participants to bring a copy of the Learner Guide from their class.)

##### **Display the following resources:**

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis
- Samples of Adult Learner Guides

##### **Prepare the room for learning:**

- Arrange chairs in semicircles facing a focal wall.
- Provide light refreshments.
- Place nametags on small table alongside refreshments.
- Prepare the visual for Step 1.
- Prepare three placards: Disciple members in the church, Assimilate new members, Reach unchurched persons who might never otherwise hear His Story.

#### **PRESENT:**

##### **1. INTRODUCTION (15 min.)**

Greet participants and ask everyone to make a nametag. Invite participants to enjoy refreshments as they share in a time of fellowship.

Reveal the visual you prepared: “We celebrate our assignment to lead adults to study and apply God’s Word.” Explain that this session will help us strengthen our focus on a strategic ministry tool available for every class.

Lead participants to brainstorm indications that people are experiencing life changing Bible study in their class. Record responses on a large sheet of paper or on a markerboard.

Invite participants to pray for each other, their class, and the opportunity to impact the church and community.

##### **2. PRIMARY ROLES OF SUNDAY SCHOOL (10 min.)**

Direct participants to read silently “Stories of Transformation” (pp. 19-20 of *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis). Ask and discuss responses to the following question: *If all you know about the assignment of Sunday School is what is written in that paragraph, what would you say are the primary roles of our Sunday School?* (teach, reach, minister, fellowship).

Remind everyone that the Bible is our primary resource in Sunday School to help us connect with God, grow as believers, serve in the church, and go tell others.

Call attention to and distribute copies of the Learner Guides available for members of Sunday School classes. Comment: *This tool is designed to be one of our most strategic resources to help people teach, reach, minister, and fellowship.*

Ask leaders to share ways they use the Learner Guides in class and encourage their members to use it before and after class. Stress that the Learner Guide is a tool to enhance Bible study but a Learner Guide can't help if it's never used.

### **3. MISSIONARY TOOLS FOR NURTURE AND EVANGELISM (30 min.)**

Read aloud "Nurture or Evangelism?" (*Missionary Sunday School*, p. 28). Reveal the three placards. (See preparation steps.) Divide participants into three teams (or ask everyone to work together on all three assignments). Invite participants to suggest ways the Learner Guide can be used regarding each of the three categories.

As individuals or groups report, make sure to emphasize the following ideas about using the Learner Guide as a strategic missionary tool:

- Teach: provides additional Bible explanation, illustrations, questions, ideas for application; offers at least one Bible translation
- Reach: gift to prospective member or visitor, provides ideas for reaching as application to Bible studies
- Minister: gift to persons receiving ministry from class or church, provides ideas for ministry as illustrations or stories throughout lessons
- Fellowship: emphasizes opportunities to pray for and connect with members and prospects

Lead participants to identify specific way(s) their class will start or strengthen strategies for nurturing and evangelism.

### **4. CONCLUSION (5 min.)**

Encourage participants to strengthen their class missionary strategy by providing and using Learner Guides for members and prospects. Pray together for members and prospects.

# **Leadership Meeting Agenda**

## **Using the Learner Guide as a Ministry Tool—Student**

### **Prepared by:**

Bruce Edwards, Youth Ministry Specialist, Tennessee Baptist Convention

### **PREPARE:**

#### **Provide the following resources:**

- Nametags, markers, large sheets of paper, masking tape
- Prepare two large signs with one of these words written in large, bold letters: Agree, Disagree. Place the signs on opposite walls in the room.
- On the markerboard or a large sheet of paper, write these two statements: *We teach students the Bible. We teach the Bible to students.* Cover the statements until Step 3.
- Write each team assignment for Step 2 on an index card. Secure several copies of Student Learner Guides (or handouts) for next Sunday's lesson.
- Copies of *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis (available as a free download at [www.lifeway.com/DavidFrancis](http://www.lifeway.com/DavidFrancis))

#### **Display the following resources:**

- Student Learner Guides, handouts, or other student resources that are part of the curriculum used by students in your church

#### **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 (30 min.)**

Greet leaders as they arrive and invite them to complete a nametag.

Ask all leaders to stand. Then explain: *When I read a statement, decide if you agree or disagree and move to stand near the sign that corresponds to your answer. If you are undecided, you can straddle the fence by standing in the center of the room.*

Read aloud each of the following statements. Direct leaders to stand near the sign that best expresses their response. Then call for an explanation from at least one person who agrees, disagrees, and is undecided. Guide the discussion to allow input, questions, and concerns leaders may have about the resources your church uses for students in Sunday School.

1. Student Learner Guides (or handouts) are a waste of time in Sunday School.
2. Student Learner Guides (or handouts) provide great interactive opportunities for students during Bible study.
3. Student Learner Guides (or handouts) make teaching students easier.
4. The money our church spends on Student Learner Guides (or handouts) could be better used somewhere else.
5. Student Learner Guides (or handouts) can help a teacher make biblical application of the lesson.
6. I really don't understand the purpose of the Student Learner Guides (or handouts).

Thank leaders for their participation and for their input. Explain that our goal tonight is to learn how to better utilize the resources we have to enhance Bible study for our students.

## **2. MAKE THE MOST OF THE RESOURCE (20 min.)**

Group leaders into two teams. Provide large sheets of paper, markers, and Student Learner Guides (or handouts) to each team.

Give each team one of the following assignments:

Team 1: Examine the student resource for next week's lesson. Select at least one activity you could use from it. Explain the activity and how you will use it on the paper provided.

Team 2: Examine the student resource for next week's lesson. Select at least one activity that a student could use in their personal devotion time that would strengthen their walk with Christ. Explain the activity and its benefits on the paper provided.

Allow time for teams to do their assignment. Call for responses. Explain that the student resource material is not designed to be read word-for-word in class or to be used the same way every week; it is a tool for teachers and students, designed to enhance and support the Bible study.

## **3. THE TEXTBOOK (10 min.)**

Call attention to the statements you have written on the markerboard or on a large sheet of paper. Ask: *Which of these statements defines what you do in Sunday School each week? Why? What's the difference?*

Explain that our goal as leaders is to get students into God's Word so that the truths will become an active and vital part of who they are.

Direct the group to "The Bible: The Textbook of Sunday School" in *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis (pp. 22-23). Highlight the fact that Bible study is the centerpiece of Sunday School but it must be focused on students—where they are in their spiritual development, what they can comprehend and put into practice.

Ask: *What are some interactive gadgets that teenagers use?* (cell phones, Wii, remote controls, etc.) Stress that student learner resources are designed to be interactive, to guide students to interact with other students, with the teacher, but most of all, with God's Word.

Close the session in prayer.

## **Leadership Meeting Agenda**

### **Using the Learner Guide as a Ministry Tool—Childhood**

#### **Prepared by:**

Klista Storts, Childhood Ministry Specialist, Childhood Training and Events, LifeWay Christian Resources

#### **PREPARE:**

##### **Provide the following resources:**

- Nametags, markers, pencils

##### **Display the following resources:**

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis
- Copies of the current quarter's curriculum, including Learner Guides

##### **Prepare the room for learning:**

- Arrange chairs in a semi-circle facing the front of the room. Place nametags in chairs.
- Prior to class, gather several copies of unused Learner Guides from previous sessions. (If these are unavailable, use colored sheets of paper.)
- On each Learner Guide or paper, use a marker to write a different way the Learner Guide can be used either in the classroom or as a ministry tool. (Some possible answers: a review tool to be used one-on-one with a teacher, sent home with a parent to continue the learning experience; sent home to introduce the Bible to a parent, a review tool for large group time, sent in the mail the week prior to the lesson to encourage the child to be better prepared, etc.)
- Wad up each Learner Guide or paper and toss around the room.
- Additional copies of the Learner Guides or paper should be left uncrumpled but strewn around the room. Have enough for at least one per conferee.

#### **PRESENT:**

##### **1. INTRODUCTION (5 min.)**

Greet participants and ask them to complete a nametag. Share: *As you look around the room, you may be wondering what this trash is all over the floor! If you take a closer look: it's not trash. These are Sunday School Learner Guides! Does this remind you of what sometimes happens with the Learner Guides in your class? Do you sometimes question if anything comes from using those Learner Guides? Today, we're going to talk about how you as a teacher can make sure that something indeed does come from using Learner Guides.*

##### **2. WHAT'S THE USE? (10 min.)**

Discuss why the Learner Guide is important to a child's Sunday morning experience as well as to his spiritual growth outside the church. Mention the following ideas and others you want to add.

Learner guides:

- Help kids shape a positive biblical worldview as they learn to apply Bible truths to their lives.
- Encourage kids to develop good Bible study habits by completing follow-up activities at home.



- Encourage parents' involvement as the learning experience is continued at home.
- Enhance classroom learning when used by the teacher to review with a child.

### **3. TRASH TO TREASURE (20 min.)**

*Share: As mentioned before, the trash you've seen lying on the floor is unused Learner Guides. However, remember the old saying, "One man's trash is another man's treasure"? Let's take a closer look at this trash and see what treasures we can find.*

Pick up one of the wadded guides and toss it to a conferee. Ask the person to straighten out the paper and read the possible use written there. Discuss. Continue this process until all wadded guides have been opened and discussed.

Ask if there are other ways the group can think of to use the Learner Guides. If so, discuss.

### **4. HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM (20 min.)**

Ask each conferee to pick up one of the remaining Learner Guides from the floor. Direct them to write a way they have seen Learner Guides misused or unused at their church (possible answers: left in the hallway; torn into pieces; never taken off the shelf, etc.).

Once their statements have been written, encourage them to fold the Learner Guide into a paper airplane. All the planes should be thrown at once, with everyone shouting: "Houston, we have a problem" as the planes fly through the air. Ask everyone to pick up a plane other than their own and throw them again while shouting, "Houston, we have a problem." Once again, ask everyone to pick up an airplane from the floor.

Divide the group into three or four smaller groups of equal size. Ask them to be seated together and discuss the problems listed on the airplanes they've picked up. Encourage them to discuss ways to solve the problem or to use the problem as a springboard for a new way to use the Learner Guide. Ask the groups to share their results.

### **5. CONCLUSION (5 min.)**

*Share: Although you may feel discouraged by the lack of use or even misuse of the Learner Guides we give, my prayer is that you will feel energized as you leave here today to take an active role in ensuring that they're used to their fullest extent. Be encouraged by God's Word when He tells us in Isaiah 55:11: "So My word that comes from My mouth will not return to Me empty, but it will accomplish what I please, and will prosper in what I send it to do."*

Close in prayer.