

## **Leadership Meeting Agenda**

### **Grouping People for Effective Bible Study—All Leaders Together**

#### **Prepared by:**

Wayne Poling, Senior Lead Sunday School Specialist, Leadership and Evangelism Training and Events LifeWay Christian Resources

#### **PREPARE:**

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

- Nametags, large sheets of paper, markers, a markerboard and dry-erase markers

##### **Display the following resource:**

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis.

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

- Arrange chairs in a semicircle. Place nametags and markers on a table near the entrance.
- Prepare a half sheet handout for each conferee expected with this Scripture and questions:
  - Exodus 18:14-23
  - What was Moses' dilemma observed by Jethro?
  - What advice did Jethro give?
  - What can this passage teach us about Sunday School?
- Prepare a handout for each conferee with the following information:

Take a Look at Our Organization

  - 1) Do you have enough leaders for your class in light of suggested teacher/learner ratios?
    - Babies—1:2
    - 1s-2s—1:3
    - 3s-Pre-K—1:4
    - Kindergarten—1:5
    - Grades 1-6—1:6
    - Grades 7-12—1:12
    - Adults—1:16 (teacher to members)/1:4 (teacher, class outreach leader, class care group leaders, etc. to members)
  - 2) Is your class preparing future leaders?
  - 3) Is your class organized based on who attends or whom you desire to reach?
  - 4) Do leaders and members in your class understand whom they're responsible for (specific ages, etc.)?
  - 5) Has your class accepted responsibility for reaching and ministering to that group? Do they have a heart for that group?

#### **PRESENT:**

##### **1. INTRODUCTION (25 min.)**

Ask each person to compete a nametag as they enter. Instruct participants to find two other people, sit down together, read Exodus 18:14-23 out loud, and answer the questions. After five minutes, begin discussing responses. State: *This session is going to explore how your Sunday School can most effectively group people for the Bible study and ministry.*

Work through the questions and encourage discussion.

- *What was Moses' dilemma observed by Jethro?* Moses tried to handle all of the responsibilities and make all of the judgments and decisions for the people. The people

had to wait all day to bring their issues to him. He was not leading effectively.

- *What advice did Jethro give?* Moses found godly men and placed them over thousands, hundreds, fifties, and tens. He let them handle the issues of the people and he decided the important issues. Moses was able to endure the load and the people were satisfied.
- *What can this passage teach us about Sunday School?* As teachers and leaders we should not try to carry the responsibility alone. We should find others that will share the load. Effective organization can lead to more effective ministry and teaching.

Ask: *How did this organization enable the people to worship and follow God more effectively?* Moses' organization might be defined as "placing ourselves in the best possible position to be used by God." State: *This session will explore ways our Sunday School can organize itself to minister and teach most effectively.*

## **2. ACTIVITY (30 min.)**

Distribute "Take a Look at Our Organization" handouts. Ask each participant to answer each question with a yes or no and a brief statement explaining their answer.

First hear the responses from the conferees; then discuss the principle behind the question.

- 1) Do you have enough leaders for your class in light of suggested ratios of teacher to learners? Our ability to focus on individuals in a way that leads toward transformation and engages members is enhanced by having the proper ratio of teachers to learners. Point out that the younger the age, the smaller the ratio because of attention span and learning needs. Explain the two ratios for adults represent the ratio of teacher to members (1:16) and ratio of class leaders to members (1:4). Explain the importance of organizing adult classes into care groups with a care group leader responsible for 4 to 6 members.
- 2) Is your class preparing future leaders? Adult classes are the source of new teachers. The challenge is to lead adults to catch a vision for how God might use them in service in the Sunday School and encourage them to pursue those opportunities. Preschool and children's leaders can encourage adults to visit their classes and discover the joy of teaching preschoolers and children.
- 3) Is your class organized based on who attends or whom you desire to reach? In *Missionary Sunday School* David Francis says, "The missionary Sunday School is satisfied only when everyone within its reach has access to a Bible study group appropriate for his/her age, stage of life, and ability to learn." Sunday School exists to apply the truths of God's Word to life and to reach and minister to a lost world.
- 4) Do leaders and members in your class understand whom your class is responsible for (specific ages, etc.)? A missionary Sunday School class understands whom they are seeking to reach, teach, and minister and will target ways to reach and minister to that group. That understanding will insure that prospects, guests, and new members are assigned the correct class and will avoid duplication of responsibility between classes.
- 5) Has your class accepted responsibility for reaching and ministering to that group? Do they have a heart for that group? Missionary Sunday School classes understand their primary responsibility for reaching, teaching, and ministering to their target group, will accept that responsibility, and have a burden to touch the lives of those beyond the class.

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

Read Acts 20:27-28— "*I did not shrink back from declaring to you the whole plan of God ( Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock ( that the Holy Spirit has appointed you to as overseers (to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood.*" Pray that God will lead each class in your Sunday School to seek to declare "the whole plan of God" to everyone for whom they are responsible: those already in the class and those not yet reached.

## **Leadership Meeting Agenda**

### **Grouping People for Effective Bible Study—Adults**

#### **Prepared by:**

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

#### **PREPARE:**

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

- Nametags, markers
- Provide list of Adult Sunday School class rolls that includes names and ages/birth years of members. Also include prospects for each class if available.
- Markerboard with markers, eraser; large sheets of paper

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

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis

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

- Arrange chairs in circle or semicircle facing a focal wall. Place nametags and marker pens on small table by room entrance or place nametags on each chair
- Provide large sheets of paper and markers for discussion questions.
- Prepare visuals (steps 1, 2, 3, 5).
- Provide snack items and drinks.

#### **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 two visuals with the following assignments. Invite participants to discuss and list responses for one of these two assignments: 1) Put yourself in place of someone who is already attending your Sunday School class. What are things you have in common with others attending the class? 2) Put yourself in the place of a person in our community who does not participate in a Bible study group. What would you be looking for in a Sunday School class?

Lead participants to discuss and share responses. Record list of things in common from discussion on the markerboard or large sheet of paper. Explain that this session will help us identify ways we can group adults together to reach and minister to them through our Sunday School. Lead in prayer.

##### **2. WE CAN CONNECT WITH ADULTS (15 min.)**

Lead participants to overview how we group adults together in our Sunday School. Invite participants to overview their class roll (members) and identify the target groups of adults who are associated with each class. Invite participants to list the primary target groups for our classes on a large sheet of paper. Explain that we have grouped our classes to minister to and reach the adults in these target groups. Ask participants to brainstorm some places where we are not currently connecting with adults in our church or our community.

Reveal visual with this statement: “It becomes necessary to organize and start classes to take care of all the adults on the church roll and those who are discovered in the community.”

Divide participants into two groups. Assign one group to identify where we find adults from these commonalities or target groups who are already members of this church but are not participating in Bible study groups. Assign the other group to identify where we will find adults from these commonalities or target groups in our community who are not participating in Bible study groups.

Call for group reports. Say: *The reason we group our classes like we do is to make sure we are reaching members of our church as well as persons discovered in the community.*

### **3. FOLLOW PRINCIPLES FOR GROUPING ADULTS WE WILL REACH (10 min.)**

Explain that there are several significant principles to use in connecting with adults. Reveal visual(s) that list the following principles: 1) The guiding principle is that we group adults together based on something the adults have in common with others. 2) The best guiding principle is to group adults by age. 3) Identify groups of adults not being reached through the existing classes.

Explain that we have opportunity to connect with members and prospects by providing classes for persons we are not currently reaching for Bible study.

### **4. IDENTIFY VARIETY OF WAYS TO GROUP ADULTS (10 min.)**

Review the list of target groups and things people have in common from the opening assignment. Lead participants to brainstorm a list of additional things people might have in common. Emphasize that there are many appropriate ways to group adults. Make sure the following are listed: Group by life stage (young adults, parents, empty nesters, recently retired, and senior adults), affinity, gender, family status (married, single), coed, parenting (such as age of oldest child) or work issues (such as persons who have similar jobs or job schedules). Explain that without regard to their chronological age, sharing life transitions creates a kinship among adults.

Say: *We must organize enough classes, departments, or groups to provide for your possibilities, not just your current attendance.*

### **5. CONCLUSION (10 min.)**

Say: *We must find adults we could reach if we had a class for them.*

Reveal visuals on which you have written these questions: *What are groups of adults in our church who have not been reached? What are target groups of adults in our neighborhood we could connect with if we provided a team of adults to focus on reaching, ministering to, and teaching them through a class?* Lead participants to discuss responses.

Ask participants to list specific actions to take to start or strengthen Bible study groups for at least two target groups.

Lead in prayer of commitment.

## **Leadership Meeting Agenda**

### **Grouping People for Effective Bible Study—Student**

#### **Prepared by:**

Brenda Harris, Content Editor, Church Resources Division, LifeWay Christian Resources

#### **PREPARE:**

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

- Nametags, markers, pencils, large sheets of paper, masking tape
- Markerboard and dry-erase markers
- Prepare three large sheets of paper with one of the following questions on each one. Place the sheets on random walls throughout the room. Provide markers near each sheet.
  1. What groups were you a member of when you were a teenager?
  2. What groups are the students in our church members of today?
  3. What's the value of belonging to a group?
- Ask leaders to bring their copies of *Missionary Sunday School* with them to the session. Have extra copies available (download free at [www.lifeway.com/DavidFrancis](http://www.lifeway.com/DavidFrancis)).

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

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis
- Samples of current Student Sunday School curriculum

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

- Arrange chairs in a semicircle facing the front of the room.
- Place nametags on a small table near the door or place one in each chair.
- Have extra copies of *Missionary Sunday School* available (download free at [www.lifeway.com/DavidFrancis](http://www.lifeway.com/DavidFrancis)).

#### **PRESENT:**

##### **1. INTRODUCTION (10 min.)**

Greet leaders and encourage them to complete a nametag. Direct them to respond to the questions on the wall and then to stand in the center of the room and wait for further instructions.

Direct leaders to form a group according to the following categories.

- First, form four groups based on your favorite sport—baseball, basketball, football, or golf.
- Next, form ten groups based on the last digit of your cell phone number.
- Third, group by birth order—oldest, youngest, middle, or only child.
- Finally form three groups based on the time of day that you're most productive—morning, afternoon, or night. Direct leaders to remain in this group for the remainder of the meeting.

Observe how groups formed, who took the lead in getting everyone together, etc. Then comment: *People can be grouped together in more ways than we can count! Today we're going to talk about how grouping students for effective Bible study.*

## **2. WHY GROUP? (15 min.)**

Guide a discussion of leader responses. Emphasize that some groups are more positive than others. Possible answers may include:

1. School clubs, BSU, youth choir, 4-H, band, Sunday School, etc.
2. School clubs, gangs, choir, band, Sunday School, FaceBook groups, etc.
3. Acceptance, similar interests, to be with friends, to get to know guys/girls, etc.

Discuss the similarities and differences of groups today versus when we were younger. Stress the positive value of being part of a group but acknowledge the challenges some students have finding their niche in a group.

Lead in prayer, asking for God's wisdom as we examine this topic of grouping students for effective Bible study.

## **3. OUR GROUP (15 min.)**

Call for a volunteer to draw a diagram on the markerboard that depicts the current organizational structure of Student Sunday School in your church. Encourage other leaders to offer assistance to make sure the diagram is as accurate as possible.

Ask: *Why do we group students the way we do?* (Possible responses may be: We've always done it this way, We do it because of space available, We group this way because of the number of students who are coming, etc.)

Ask a series of questions to help leaders consider the process our church uses to group students: *Who makes the decisions regarding how students are grouped? In an ideal situation, how should we group students? Why? Should students themselves be involved in these decisions? Why or why not? Do we group based on who is actually coming to Sunday School or who we are expecting to come? What's the difference?*

Use this discussion forum as a way to educate, not as an opportunity to blame or criticize.

## **4. NOW WHAT? (15 min.)**

Direct each of the three groups to examine one of these assignments. Refer them to pages 50-51 and 56-58 of *Missionary Sunday School* for help.

- Morning Group: List the benefits of grouping students by age/grade.
- Afternoon Group: List the benefits of grouping students by gender.
- Night Group: List potential problems that might occur when students are not grouped appropriately.

Call for group reports. Encourage leaders to be open to the grouping possibilities that provide the greatest environment for learning, not just what's more comfortable for the leaders or what follows the traditions of the past. As the Night Group reports, discuss solutions to potential problems.

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

Close in prayer that the decisions we make about grouping students will be based on what will best meet their needs for spiritual growth and development.



## **Leadership Meeting Agenda**

### **Grouping People for Effective Bible Study—Childhood**

#### **Prepared by:**

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

#### **PREPARE:**

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

- Nametags, markers, pencils, large sheets of paper
- Locate pictures of the following items and glue or tape each one to an index card: lemon drop; licorice; lollipop; lettuce; blueberry; strawberry; pineapple; tomato; cinnamon roll; biscuit; croissant; crouton; chocolate syrup; marshmallow cream; caramel sauce; salad dressing. (If pictures are unavailable, write each word on an index card instead.)
- Place the cards in small bags in the following sets of four:
  - Set 1: lemon drop; licorice; lollipop; lettuce
  - Set 2: blueberry; tomato; strawberry; pineapple
  - Set 3: crouton, cinnamon roll; biscuit; croissant
  - Set 4: chocolate syrup, marshmallow cream; salad dressing; caramel sauce

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

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis
- Samples of current Sunday School curriculum

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

- Arrange chairs in a semicircle facing the front of the room.
- Place nametags on a small table near the door or place one in each chair.

#### **PRESENT:**

##### **1. INTRODUCTION (10 min.)**

Ask attendees to group themselves according to the following categories.

First, group by eye color.

Second, group by birth month.

Third, group by gender (male or female).

For the final group, divide by whether you're a morning or night person.

Between each time of regrouping, encourage conferees to meet someone they may not know well and find something they have in common.

*Share: People can be grouped together in more ways than we can count! Today we're going to talk about how grouping children in Sunday School can help their learning experience.*

##### **2. ONE OF THESE THINGS IS NOT LIKE THE OTHER (15 min.)**

Separate attendees into four groups and distribute a set of the cards you prepared earlier.

Ask each group to determine which of the cards from their set does not belong and separate it from the rest. Ask for an explanation of how they came to that conclusion.

Gather the four cards that were removed from the sets. (These should be: lettuce, tomato, crouton, and salad dressing.) Explain that while these cards did not fit into the previous sets, they are much better suited when grouped together in their own set.

Discuss how this relates to grouping children into Sunday School classes. Share: *While all our Sunday School members may be children, we don't necessarily want to group them all together. Children are at different levels of development. They learn best when grouped with others of similar ages, abilities, and understanding.*

### **3. WHY DOES IT MATTER? (30 min.)**

Assign one of the following tasks to each of the groups formed earlier.

Group 1: List the benefits of grouping children.

*(Possible answers: Children can better understand when taught at their level of development. Curriculum can be focused on one age group. Better classroom management. Better able to develop relationships.)*

Group 2: List as many ways as you can to group children.

*(Possible answers: Age, Gender, School Grade, Broad Ages (i.e. Younger Children/Older Children), Narrow Ages (Babies; Toddlers; 2s, etc.). Share that a Preschool grouping chart can be found on pages 60 and 61 in the Missionary Sunday School book.*

Group 3: List roadblocks that might prevent grouping.

*(Possible answers: Space, Not enough teachers, Small number of children, Budget for curriculum.)*

Group 4: List problems that might occur when children are not grouped well.

*(Possible answers: Discipline problems, too many children in one room, loss of ability to teach at each child's level of understanding. Relationship building is harder.)*

Ask each group to present their findings. Discuss each task and fill in information as needed.

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

Encourage leaders to examine their class rolls to determine if they are grouped in the best way possible. Conclude with prayer.