

Missionary Sunday School

Conference Plan for Children's Leaders

Prepared by: Larry Golden, Regional Church Consultant, Church and Network Partnerships, LifeWay Christian Resources

Purpose: To provide a two-hour teaching experience for Sunday School leaders working with grades 1- 6, for the purpose of identifying and implementing a strategy for becoming a Missionary Sunday School class.

How to use this plan

- For the local church: Use to train Children's Sunday School leaders during a local church training or kick-off event.
- For regional and state training: Use to train Children's Sunday School leaders in state or associational training events.

PREPARE:

Provide the following resources for use throughout the training:

- Nametag for each participant. (A nametag template is provided in the zip files for the *2012 Missionary Sunday School Emphasis Kit*.)
- Sentence strips, markers, and colored sticky notes for Step 2.
- Samples of LifeWay Children's Sunday School resources
- Children Handout 1: Missionary Sunday School Study Guide
- Children Handout 2: Levels of Bible Skills
- Children Handout 3: How Children Develop
- Children Handout 4: Approaches to Learning
- Copies of Levels of Bible Skills pamphlet (available at www.lifeway.com)
- Copies of Levels of Biblical Learning (available for purchase in packs of 25 or as a free download from <http://www.lifeway.com/n/Church-Strategy/Levels-of-Biblical-Learning>.)
- Children's Floor Puzzle "Into All The World" (available at www.lifeway.com)
- ABCs of Becoming a Christian Quick Scene Bulletin Board Set (available at www.lifeway.com)
- ABC Memory Cross (available at www.lifeway.com)
- Ministry enrollment list of each child in Sunday School for individual Children's leaders
- Communicate with learners before the conference to bring their Bible and Bible Teaching for Kids Leader Guide.

Download the following materials:

- Provide one copy of *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis for each participant. The book is available as a free download or you can order copies for \$1.50 each at www.lifeway.com/davidfrancis. The book can also be purchased at the Apple iStore.
- PowerPoint presentation: Missionary Sunday School—Children.ppt

Prepare a display of the following resources:

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis

- *Transformational Church* by Ed Stetzer and Thom Rainer
- Samples of LifeWay Children's Sunday School resources
- Leading a Child to Christ Resource (optional)
- ABC Memory Cross (optional)
- ABCs of Becoming a Christian Quick Scene Bulletin Board Set (optional)
- Into All the World Floor Puzzle (optional)
- *Super Duper Fun & Exciting Absolutely Thought-igniting Bible Activities for Kids*, 1st–6th grade edition
- The Giant Game Floor Mat and the Giant Game Floor Mat Children's CD-ROM

Prepare the room for learning:

- Arrange chairs in a semicircle. Place nametags in chairs. Provide markers.
- Arrange for necessary equipment if you are using the PowerPoint.
- Reproduce handouts.
- Make a focal wall with a city or regional map titled "Into All The World."
- (Optional) Make a focal wall with the ABCs of Becoming A Christian Quick Scene Bulletin Board Set.

PRESENT:

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTION (15 min.)

Greet conferees as they arrive and ask each person to complete an "I'm a Missionary" nametag.

[SLIDE 1]

Option 1: Hand conferees at least one piece of the Into All The World Floor Puzzle. Keep handing out puzzle pieces to each conferee as they enter the room. Ask the conferees to work together to assemble the puzzle and to discuss among themselves what "into all the world" means to them.

Option 2: If the Floor Puzzle is not available, create a focal wall with a local city or regional map and use the title: "Into all the World: The Missionary Nature of Sunday School." Ask conferees to discuss among themselves what "into all the world" means to them.

[SLIDE 2]

Call the conferees together and introduce the conference by explaining that we'll be exploring the missionary nature of Sunday School.

Ask: *Have you ever considered yourself a missionary?* Allow for feedback.

Instruct conferees to share with a partner memories of hearing a past missionary report on their work. Ask: *What do you remember the most from the missionary's report? What intrigued you the most about what you heard?*

As conferees brainstorm about what they remember or know about the work of the missionaries, ask a volunteer to record the statements on a large sheet of paper or on the markerboard. Make a connection between the statements recorded and the work in Children's Sunday School. (Examples might include: Missionaries are assigned to specific group of people; we are assigned a specific age group. Missionaries have a sense of call to their ministry; we have a sense of call to our children. Missionaries want to see people come to faith in Jesus Christ; we want to see our children come to personal faith in Jesus Christ.)

[SLIDE 3]

Ask: How would you describe the difference between being a Sunday School Leader and being a Sunday School Missionary?

Distribute copies of Children's Handout 1: Missionary Sunday School Children's Handout 1 and instruct conferees to answer #1. Challenge learners to think about their role as Sunday School missionaries throughout the conference.

Lead in prayer for the training.

2. THE MISSION (15 min)

[SLIDE 4]

Distribute colored sticky notes to conferees and direct them to write one synonym for "Sunday School" on each note. Have conferees place their sticky notes on the wall. Ask conferees why they chose the different synonyms.

Create several small groups and hand out a sentence strip to each group with the following statement: "_____ is the heart of the Sunday School." Direct groups to decide on the word that should fill in the blank and write it on the sentence strip (the word can be from the sticky notes or another word they choose).

While the groups work, arrange the sticky note synonyms into an affinity diagram (an affinity diagram is simply arranging the words that are similar together).

Ask a representative of each group to explain how they chose to complete the sentence.

[SLIDE 5]

Make a connection between the synonyms and the transformational purpose of Sunday School. Explain that Sunday School got started as a missionary movement led mainly by lay people. Transformation is the heart of the Sunday School missionary movement. When Sunday Schools were started, not only were individuals transformed, but communities were transformed as well.

[SLIDE 6]

Present a short lecture on the transformational mission of the Sunday School. Use the information from pages 8-20 of *Missionary Sunday School* for background. (For additional information, read *A Fruitful Life: The Missionary Labor of Stephen Paxson* by Belle Paxson Drury, originally published in 1882, and available at www.Amazon.com). Highlight the historical emphasis Sunday School has placed on children. Remind leaders that they are part of the legacy of Sunday School God has used to bring transformation to children and their families.

[SLIDE 7]

Briefly explain that *Transformational Church* unpacks the research LifeWay conducted in 2008-2009. It was the largest research project of its kind. One of the findings of the research was that churches doing a good job modeling transformation were doing several things very well. One of those areas came to be called a missionary mentality. Transformational Churches consider their context and that informed how they would impact the community for transformation. The Sunday School Missionary Movement started over 200 years ago with this exact mentality. Sunday School did not start as a program. It started as a Missionary Movement to bring transformation into lives of children, families, and communities.

Instruct conferees to answer #2 of Children's Handout 1.

3. TEACHING HIS STORY (30 min)

[SLIDE 8]

Say: *Transformation takes place in the lives of children as they are taught His story.* Have conferees select a partner and open their Bibles to Mark 10:13-16. Instruct one partner to read the Scripture. After the Scripture is read, instruct the other partner to tell the story in his own words while keeping the Bible opened to the Bible passage.

Make the point that the Bible is our textbook and should be front and center each Sunday morning as we teach His story.

After identifying the Bible as the textbook, have conferees turn to the Using Your Leader Guide section in the front of the *Bible Teaching for Kids* Leader Guide. The Leader Guides are arranged to help leaders easily put together a weekly lesson using a well thought-out plan. Have conferees overview the "Using Your Leader Guide." Take time for any questions. Make the point that the Leader Guide should never take the place of the Bible. It is important for the children to see the Sunday School leaders model using the Bible. Instruct conferees to answer #3 and #4 of the Children's Handout 1.

[SLIDE 9]

State: *We are called to teach His story and we have a plan to accomplish that goal.* Children's Sunday School covers a span of six years. LifeWay utilizes a plan for Sunday School called LifeSpan. LifeSpan for children's Sunday School can be stated in three simple words, **Hear, Know, and Do.** We want kids to **Hear God's Word, Know God's Word, and Do God's Word.**

[SLIDE 10]

To emphasize Hear, Know, and Do, have conferees point to their ears and say **Hear**; point to their forehead and say **know**, and stretch their hands out in front and say **Do**. Repeat this process several times.

Distribute *Levels of Biblical Learning*. Identify the Hear, Know, and Do icons in the *Levels of Biblical Learning* pamphlet or copies. Have the participants search their *Bible Teaching for Kids* Leader Guide and locate the icons from next Sunday's lesson. Explain that the icons identify the focus and purpose of the different parts of each lesson.

[SLIDE 11]

Comment: *The Levels of Biblical Learning* information expands *Hear, Know and Do*. Have participants locate the 10 concept areas in the *Levels of Biblical Learning* information for their age group and identify which level(s) of learning Mark 10:13-16 might relate to (the concept areas of family and Jesus.) Have participants go back to their *Bible Teaching for Kids* Leader Guide and identify the *Level of Biblical Learning* from several lessons.

[SLIDE 12]

Distribute Children's Handout 2: Levels of Bible Skills. Direct participants to look in their *Bible Teaching for Kids* Leader Guide and identify the "Bible Skills Activity" for next Sunday's lesson. Call attention to Children's Handout 2 and ask to identify the Bible Skills that are appropriate for the age group they teach. Ask them to share with the person next to them how their level of Bible Skills compares to what the children they teach should know.

[SLIDE 13]

Emphasize that our role as leaders is to teach His story using appropriate age group teaching activities. Since not everyone has training in how to teach children, the *Bible Teaching for Kids* Leader Guide helps by giving leaders age appropriate activities. This makes putting a lesson together easier for leaders who are already extremely busy. This does not cancel out the importance of the leader factor. No one knows the children better than the leader. It is OK to use other activities or adjust the suggested activities for your children. (Optional activities might include reusing an activity from a previous lesson that went well, using ideas from the *Super Duper Fun & Exciting Absolutely Thought-igniting Bible Activities for Kids* for 1st – 6th grade edition, using the giant Game Floor Mat and the Giant Game Floor Mat Children's CD-ROM, or using ideas from www.lifeway.com/extra for Kids.) Caution leaders not to evaluate learning activities from an adult perspective. Remember that children learn differently than adults.

Instruct conferees to answer #5, #6, and #7 on Children's Handout 1.

4. EVERY PERSON (15 min)

[SLIDE 14]

Read John 4:35–38. Remind participants that they are in partnership with the Adult Sunday School, other children’s ministries of the church, and with parents to plant, sow, and reap a harvest among the children whom God has entrusted you.

[SLIDE 15]

Direct conferees to read the chapter introduction on page 30 of *Missionary Sunday School* and answer #8 on Children’s Handout 1.

[SLIDE 16]

Call attention to “those kids” on pages 30-31 of *Missionary Sunday School*. Ask learners to answer #9 on Children’s Handout 1. Ask: *Where are “those kids” found in our community?*

[SLIDE 17]

Ask: *What is an UPG?* Have conferees find the meaning of UPG by searching *Missionary Sunday School*. Instruct conferees to answer #10 on Children’s Handout 1.

Ask: *Who is your people group? Is it first graders, second graders, third graders?* Comment that missionaries think in terms of the people groups they are assigned. They have the responsibility of reaching that specific group of people. Instruct conferees to identify the learning and developmental characteristics of your people group and to answer #11 on Children’s Handout 1.

[SLIDE 18]

Distribute Children’s Handout 3: How Children Develop. Direct conferees to identify a child and circle at least two developmental items under each heading that describe the child.

[SLIDE 19]

Distribute and call attention to Children’s Handout 4: Approaches to Learning. Have conferees select two intelligences that are their preferred way of learning. Say: *Our children have learning strengths. It is important that we provide different opportunities for children to learn His story. LifeWay curriculum helps keep a balance. It would be easy for us to only do activities that only appeal to our own intelligences.* Arrange the conferees into small groups. Using Children’s Handout 4 and the *Bible Teaching for Kids* Leader Guide, have conferees find activities that relate to each of the intelligences.

Option: Place three large sheets of paper on the wall, one each for grades 1 & 2, grades 3 & 4, and grades 5 & 6. Each conferee will go to the large sheet of paper for the age group they teach. Direct each group to select a scribe. Instruct them to use Children’s Handout 4 and create a profile of the children they teach. On the bottom of the large sheet of paper, ask them to list places in the community where these children can be found. Allow time for reports.

Brainstorm places they can make contact with their UPG (unreached people group). Responses may include VBS, Upwards Sports, Fall Festivals, etc. See chapter 3 of *Missionary Sunday School* for other outreach ideas.

Instruct conferees to answer #12 on Children's Handout 1.

[SLIDE 20]

Lead in a discussion of The ABCs of Becoming a Christian. Comment that every child will come to a time of expressing a need for a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit will work with each child individually. Our responsibility is to listen and be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's work in the lives of our children. Dennis Pethers gives Children's Sunday School Missionaries a great definition of evangelism: "Evangelism is leaving the person that I've met with a better understanding of God than they would have had if they had never met me" (from *More to Life* by Dennis Pethers, 12). Emphasize that the goal for the end of class each Sunday is to leave the children we teach closer to God when they leave than when they arrived. Call your conferees attention of the ABCs of Becoming a Christian section in the *Biblical Levels of Learning* pamphlet. Do an overview of the information.

Option 1: Overview the ABCs of Becoming a Christian using the Memory Cross resource.

Option 2: Create a bulletin board using the ABCs of Becoming a Christian Quick Scene. Use the bulletin board to overview the ABCs of Becoming a Christian.

Homework Option: Instruct conferees to view the eight-session video series on leading a child to Christ (available free at the LifeWay's Kids blog: www.lifeway.com/kidsministry101, type "evangelism" into the search box, and scroll down to the first video).

Instruct conferees to answer #13 on Children's Handout 1.

5. CONCLUSION (15 min)

[SLIDE 21]

Summarize the story of "A Daughter, A Daddy, and A Class of Boys" (pp. 13-14 of *Missionary Sunday School*). Emphasize that Stephen Paxson became a Sunday School Missionary because his daughter wanted to go to Sunday School.

Pair each conferee with another leader in their Sunday School Department. Ask them to pray for each child on the enrollment ministry list individually by name.