

SUNDAY SCHOOL WORKERS' MEETINGS

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INTRODUCTION:

A growing and vibrant Sunday School program needs a lot of planning and preparation to make the program work. Regular Sunday School, or adult Bible Study workers' meetings, are a must in building a strong Sunday School program. Church leaders across the country agree with this. For example, Bob Flegal of the Northwest Baptist Convention says, "The weekly workers' meeting is the best tool that the Pastor and the Sunday School Director have to lead the Sunday School to increase enrollment and attendance, to improve the Bible teaching, to enlarge the evangelistic results, and to support the total program of the church. Without a weekly workers' meeting, the Sunday School soon suffers from lack of communication, misplaced priorities, little evangelism, poor teaching, and low worker morale. The weekly workers' meeting can help produce the results that leaders desire."

The meetings not only strengthen the program, but encourage workers and help to build a team spirit in the total Sunday School.

In the following section we will discuss why we should have Sunday School workers' meetings and how to conduct them. We will suggest who should attend, what should be presented and when to hold meetings.

I. WHY SHOULD WE HAVE WORKERS' MEETINGS?

1. We all see the need to increase the number of people we reach and the number of souls saved, and the need to improve the quality of our teaching. As we do these things we are supporting the church and the work of the Lord.
2. As we meet together we will build a team spirit and commitment to achieving these goals.
3. It will aid us to tie the Sunday School together with a unified program within the departments and across the various age groups.
4. Planning for teaching, promotions, and other various programs can be communicated, coordinated, and committed to on the part of each teacher and department or class worker.
5. As we learn from each other how to teach the lessons, we will become better teachers and better able to minister the Word of God to our classes.
6. We will be able to improve our outreach and ministry to individuals.

II. HOW SHOULD WE CONDUCT WORKERS' MEETINGS?

Effective meetings are required to keep the workers interested and inspire their regular attendance. If the workers do not receive benefit from the meetings, they will not attend faithfully. Everyone who leads a meeting must invest the necessary time in preparing for effective meetings.

1. **First, plan the meeting.** Decide what the meeting is intended to achieve; then write an agenda and specify the order of the topics to cover and the amount of time each topic should take.

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- * Place the most important topics at the front of the agenda so you make sure you cover them adequately.
- * Insure that the sequence of the topics is logical and progresses from one to the other without having to revisit topics.
- * Then ask yourself, "What would happen if I did not have this meeting?"
- * Pass out the agenda to the participants ahead of time so they have time to prepare.

2. **Second, prepare the participants to participate.**

- * Make sure they know what you intend to discuss and the objective to be achieved for each topic.
- * If they are to prepare a presentation or information, let them know ahead of time.
- * Make sure you will have all of the right people present to resolve the issues.
- * Purpose to bring each topic to closure in the meeting, and not defer it to another meeting.

3. **Third, control the meeting.** Have the group set basic rules for conducting the meeting, such as:

- * only one person speaks at a time,
- * respect each other's opinions,
- * deal with only one topic at a time, etc.,
- * present the topic and the information, recommendation, or action,
- * open the topic for discussion and bring the topic to a conclusion.

4. **Fourth, conclude the meeting.**

- * Summarize the topics that were covered.
- * State the decisions that were made, or what was accomplished.
- * Provide the participants with a written copy of the meeting notes.

III. WHO SHOULD ATTEND THE WORKERS' MEETINGS?

The success or failure of the meetings and their acceptance by the workers depends on the pastor and his support of the meetings. The pastor must believe in and want the meetings, and be willing to rearrange the church schedule to find the best time for the workers' meetings. *It should be given **priority** over other things if it is truly believed that the Sunday School is the primary ministry for outreach.* The desire for the well-being of the workers' and their ministry must be communicated to the workers and the department heads by the pastor.

1. **The division directors, or division superintendents** of the preschool, the primary, junior and teen departments **must attend**. Also the **class officers, and teachers must be present** in the meetings. Every worker must be asked to attend and told he or she is expected to be present in the meetings. Each division director should keep a roster of who attends the meeting.

2. **Department directors** of the four adult divisions should keep a roster of who attends each meeting of those who work in the department. The **teachers, outreach leaders, care captains, secretaries and other workers**, if

there are such, must attend each meeting. This will aid in getting information from the meeting to the absentees, and in follow-up on workers who consistently miss the meetings.

IV. WHAT SHOULD BE COVERED IN THE WORKERS' MEETINGS?

The meeting should consist of a time for the Sunday School Director to meet with the *department directors* and *division directors*, and the Sunday School as a whole, and a time for the workers of each department to meet together with their leaders.

This may necessitate having some of the above three meetings at different times of the week in order to meet all the needs.

1. **Division & Department Directors' meetings.** The Sunday School director, or pastoral staff who heads up the Sunday School, ought to meet with these directors for at least 15 minutes weekly. It should consist of the following:

- * Inspiration, instruction, and information
- * Review of the curriculum as needed
- * Presentation of future events
- * Evaluation of enrollment, attendance and teaching
- * Testimonies
- * Reports from the department and division directors.
- * Discussion of the needs of space, equipment, furnishings, and staffing
- * Plans to strengthen the departments and divisions
- * Prayer and team building

2. **Department Workers' Meeting.** The meeting, which ought to be weekly, will take from 45 to 60 minutes according to needs, philosophy, or methodology.

Many churches plan for this to be a 45-60 minute meeting. These are the concerns:

- * Promoting church-wide and department events
- * Evaluating the departments teaching, outreach, and ministries
- * Discussing equipment, spacing, and staffing needs
- * Discussing organization of classes and department policies and goals
- * Discussing the next Sunday's lesson or series, and:

- Lesson preparation and presentation
- How to teach the Guided Discovery method
- How to make application of the Bible truths
- Resources for Bible study and teaching
- Needs of the learners and how learning takes place
- Characteristics of the age group
- What methods or learning activities are appropriate for the age group and the Bible material to be studied
- How to study the Bible
- Principles of Scripture Interpretation
- How to get involvement and cooperation
- How to witness
- How to evaluate the results of teaching in the class session

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The department workers' meeting should allow the *outreach leader, care captains* and *secretary* of each class to discuss visitation, outreach, witnessing and ministries. Statistical briefings can be given, comparing with older records to determine if progress is being made. The following topics should be addressed:

- * Distribution of prospects cards
- * Reports on various worker visitations assignments
- * Reports on witnessing and winning people to Christ
- * Witnessing plans for the future
- * Review of training plans and events
- * Social and fellowship plans
- * Ministries to needs of bereaved, underprivileged, and hospitalized
- * Spiritual counsel for the discouraged, downhearted, and indifferent

3. **Overall Workers' Staff Meeting.** The Sunday School director's meeting with all the workers can take place in about 15-30 minutes. It depends upon how the other foregoing meetings are utilized and what the best methodology is for the whole Sunday School. It is a time for inspiration and information. If teacher training takes place in this meeting, extra time will be needed beyond the thirty minutes. This time should be happy, joyous, and have a positive spirit. Topics for this general meeting include:

- * Statistical review of progress
- * Teacher or member interview to indicate improved learning or teaching
- * Resource center features
- * Plans for future events
- * Goals of the church and Sunday School
- * Introduction of new workers
- * Recognition of outstanding division, departments, and classes
- * Testimonies of workers, members, or a recent convert
- * Topics for instruction and inspiration
- * Teacher training subjects

V. WHEN SHOULD WORKERS' MEETINGS BE HELD?

1. **Sunday school workers' meeting must be held weekly** in order to cover all the materials and keep the departments coordinated. The foregoing outlined purposes obviously prove the tremendous need of meetings at a time when things can be thoroughly covered.
2. **Competing activities, or a poor time** in the weekly calendar of events, that would keep workers away from meetings **must be avoided.**
3. In order to be faithful to the Sunday School program **it may be necessary for workers to make a choice** between working in the Sunday School and in other ministries. Sunday School must be given the priority place!
4. The Sunday School director and department, and division directors may want to hold **special meetings** at times in order to **cover special topics** that take too long to adequately cover in the regularly scheduled meetings.
5. **The Sunday School Workers' meeting should be held in a large enough room** to be conducive to meet the needs.

6. **It could be scheduled around a meal in the fellowship hall.** This would help those whose demanding employment situation makes it hard to attend. A meal with the meeting allows people to fellowship and will help to build unity and a team spirit. These meal meetings could be conducted on the Sunday School level and could be occasionally held at the department and class levels.
7. **Small rooms should be available** for department meetings to follow the general meeting.

VI. WHAT ARE THE EXPECTED RESULTS OF WORKERS' MEETINGS?

The results of this effort are what make it worthwhile. As we put time and energy into these meetings, we should be able to see measurable results. It will be very helpful if the Sunday School's department and division directors will poll the workers for feedback on the effectiveness of the meetings. If the workers' needs are not being met and they are not being challenged or receiving a benefit, then the meetings need to be restructured and improved. The workers should also be asked for their ideas on the structure of the meeting and topics to be covered. Ask them what they want and what they would like to get out of the meetings. The following ideas should be examined for substantive information and benefit to the workers.

1. **Outreach to the lost and unenlisted**

Plans and techniques are being discussed concerning reaching the lost, the unenrolled, and the people who do not attend faithfully. Open discussions are being held on what has worked for others and what may work for another class. Reports and challenges are being given to encourage each other to work harder.

2. **Teaching**

The teachers are being given valuable help and suggestions on how to prepare, teach, and present the next lesson. Teachers are looking forward to coming to the meeting to hear well-prepared and thought-out lesson plans. New resources that they can check out of the Resource center are regularly being presented to the teachers.

3. **Coordination**

The Sunday School departments are coordinated with the church calendar and goals. The departments are coordinated within age groups, and classes are coordinated within their departments. Promotions are well understood and publicized and work well in all departments. These and other good signs of good communication are present. Workers who are randomly polled consistently know about upcoming promotions or activities and new policies.

4. **Evaluation**

The weekly meetings are a time for evaluation of the Sunday School program, classes, and departments. There should be open and honest evaluation of meetings, outreach program, involvement of members in ministries, and the teaching. We should evaluate the effectiveness of the teamwork and team spirit of the workers in the classes, departments, and all through the Sunday School.