

Teachers' Training 101

Are you called? Not on the phone. Are you led? Not by the nose.

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS

Teachers

Why do You Want to be a Teacher?	1
Exercise: What are your Gifts and Talents?	2
Exercise: So, You Want to Be a Teacher	3
Tips for Teaching Sunday School	4-5
How to Teach a Lesson	6-7
Let All Things Be Done... in an Orderly Way	8
How to Be a Good Teacher	9-10
Being Creative	11
Exercise: Memory Verse Games	12
More Resources for Teachers (Online resources and others)	13

Teachers' Training

Why do We Have Teachers' Training?	14
Exercise: Bible Verses for Teaching and Teachers' Training	15
Balancing Authority and Responsibility	16
Exercise: Examples of Balancing Authority and Responsibility	17
Discipline in the Classroom	18
Replacing Fear with Trust	19
Dealing with (very) Poorly Behaved Students	20
An Extra Special Note from Sharon	21
Dealing with Problems (or Emergencies) in the Classroom	22

Resources for Teachers

Sunday School Learning Centers	23
Ideas for Learning Centers (Ages 4-7 years)	24
Ideas for Learning Centers (Ages 8-11 years)	25
Abilities by Age - Children (Ages Birth to 12)	26-32
Abilities by Age – Youth/Teens (Ages 12-18)	33-34
Other Ideas for Working with Youth	35-36
Suggested Schedule for Class Time – Youth	36
Working with Adults (Ages 18 and older)	37-38
Suggested Schedule for Class Time – Adults	39

Directions for Using These Materials

Greetings! Thank you for deciding to use “*Teachers’ Training 101*” provided by Sunday School Center. My prayer is that God will bless you as you study it.

*Sharon Kay Chatwell, MD
Founder, Sunday School Center*

To Use These Materials:

First... You don’t have to read the whole thing! (Whew!) Just pick and choose the parts that seem to relevant to you in your situation.

If you are planning a Teachers’ Training program, then pick the different parts (or lessons) that seem to apply best to your group, and work through them together.

If you have a large group, you may want to offer “Break-Out Sessions” where some of the participants choose to study one topic of interest or another. Ask leaders, in advance, to prepare the lessons for the various sessions, so that they can teach them on that day. When it is time for the Break-Out Sessions, divide the larger group of students into smaller groups, depending on their interests.

As you go through the materials, you will find some Exercises that go along with various lessons. They are there to help students think through what they have learned and decide how it all applies to them.

The Exercises can provide some nice breaks in the day; allowing you to switch things up a little. Some suggest discussion of the questions in small groups. Others contain worksheets. And at least one (the one on Memory Verse Games) can be used as a game for your group! *(But you will need to plan ahead for this!)*

Enjoy the materials! And remember that they are merely suggestions offered for your consideration. As always, remember to consult with your pastor before using any new materials in your ministry. *God bless you! - Sharon*

WHY do you want to be a Teacher?

Are you called? (Not on a phone.) Are you led? (Not by the nose.)

First... Let me let you off the hook.

You shouldn't be a teacher JUST because there is a vacancy, or JUST because someone else is begging you to fill it.

The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 12:12-29 that God has given the people in the "church" different gifts to benefit the whole group (or the body of believers). It explains that, just like our own bodies have eyes, ears, feet and hands to do different jobs to benefit the whole, the "body" of believers (of which we are all integral parts) is made up of different persons who have been gifted to do different jobs, in order to benefit the whole group (or the body of believers.)

So...Not everyone is a teacher.

1 Corinthians 12:28-29 reemphasizes this point, by saying: "God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles?"

Ask yourself... "Are all teachers?" No, they are not. So, I repeat... Not everyone is a teacher.

And...Not everyone should SEEK to BECOME a teacher.

James 3:1 tells us: "Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly."

James was warning his fellow believers in the early church that not many of them should seek to become teachers, because those who teach will be judged more strictly.

So... Maybe you're done now. Maybe you already know that you should NOT be a teacher. Perhaps you already realize that you are NOT gifted to teach, or maybe you've realized that you do NOT desire to be judged more strictly. If so, then it's time to walk away... NOW.

Do something else. Use your gifts. Help others. God has something planned just for you!

Ephesians 2:10 tells us: *For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*

You cannot go wrong if you are using your gifts and talents to benefit the body of Christ; doing the good works, which God prepared in advance for you to do! *Good-bye and God bless!*

But... if you find that you are still here... if in your heart you know that you are (*somehow already*) a teacher... if the idea of leaving makes your heart sad... **Then stay. This is for you!**

Exercise: What are Your Gifts and Talents?

For this exercise, please work together in small groups of 2-3 persons:

Write down (or discuss together) three things that you know you are good at. (*EX: Talking to people, cooking, taking care of children, teaching, reading the scriptures, listening to others.*)

1.) _____

2.) _____

3.) _____

Write down or say three things you would like to learn about teaching.

1.) _____

2.) _____

3.) _____

Exercise: So, You Want to be a Teacher

Ask yourself these questions...

- 1.) Are you called? Are you gifted by God to teach?
 - a. The evidence for this is that your students should actually learn.
- 2.) Are you led? Is the Holy Spirit urging you to take on this responsibility?
 - a. The evidence for this is that you see a need and want to help fill it.
- 3.) Examine your heart. Are your motives pure?
 - a. The evidence for this is that you want people to come to Christ as their Lord and Savior and to grow in knowledge of Him.
 - b. If you don't have the best interest of you students as your primary motivating factor, please do not become a teacher.
- 4.) Do others agree with you becoming a teacher?
 - a. The evidence for this is that people you know and respect think it would be a really good idea for you to be a teacher. They think it would be a good use of your gifts and talents.
- 5.) Have you given your heart to Jesus?
 - a. The evidence for this is that you are a new creature in Christ.
 - b. It doesn't mean you are perfect. (None of us is perfect!) It means that you have repented of your sins and accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

Did you answer "YES" to all of the questions?

YES – Great!

NO – Then please reconsider becoming a teacher. Talk to staff/ pastor/ other mentors about your gifts and talents. Perhaps your area of service lies elsewhere.

OK. Then... Let's get started...

Tips for Teaching Sunday School

We will assume (for practical purposes) that you already have a group of students to teach, a place to meet, a lesson to present, and the support of your pastor.

Step ONE – Pray

- Ask God to enable you, through His Holy Spirit, to understand the lesson and to be able to teach it
- Pray that God will bless the members of your class, so that they may understand the lesson and learn His ways from it
- Psalm 37:5 tells us, “Commit thy way unto the *LORD*; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.”

Step TWO – Become a Student

- Learn what is in the lesson
 - In order to be a good teacher, you must know what is in the lesson
 - It must mean something to you, before you can share it with others
 - You can try to skip this step, but then your teaching will not be effective
- How to get started learning the lesson
 - Read over the lesson to get the basic idea and to find the scripture verses
 - Look up the scriptures yourself in a Bible and read them, along with the other verses around them
 - Ask yourself what the scripture verses are saying
- Find the Major Points in the lesson
 - There are probably 2 – 3 major points in each lesson
 - These are the important things you want your students to learn in class
 - Make sure you have a Bible verse that confirms each major point in the lesson (*You don't have to share these with the students. You just need to make sure that what you are teaching the students is Biblically-based.*)
 - For Example:
 - Major Point – God Loves You
 - Scripture Verse – John 3:16 “*For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son...*”

Step THREE – Move Your Students Forward

- It is the job of any good teacher to take his/her students from where they are and to move them forward.
 - In order to do this, you must first know where they are.
 - Ask yourself, “What do they know already?”
 - EXAMPLE: You cannot teach children to add and subtract, if they do not already know their numbers.
 - Hopefully you can find out what your students know BEFORE you start teaching the lesson, but this is not always possible.
- Start where your students are and move them forward
 - Begin simply. Make sure everyone is following you
 - Evaluate as you are teaching. If your students don't seem to understand a word or an idea, stop and explain it, especially if it is very important.
 - This approach may slow you down.
 - You may only make it through 1 or 2 of your Major Points, but that is alright... you can always do the other ones later on! 😊
 - The goal is to move your students forward successfully.

Step FOUR – Remember Your Students

- Students' attention spans vary with their age
 - For younger students, plan 5-10 minute sections for activities/lessons
 - For older students, plan 15-20 minute sections for activities/lessons
- Students' abilities vary with their age
 - Plan activities/ crafts that are challenging, but not exasperating!
- Remember that children learn while they are playing
- For youth, be sure to incorporate opportunities for service and leadership

Step FIVE – Pray With Your Students

- It is important for students to learn to pray
- When you pray with your students, it teaches them how they can pray
- Always thank God together
 - Thank Him for His truth that you learned today
 - Thank Him for who He is
 - Thank Him for what He has done for us
 - Loved us
 - Come for us
 - Saved us
- When the time is right, ask your students if they would like to pray for the class.

How to Teach a Lesson

Prepare Yourself

- Pray
 - Confess your sins to God and accept His forgiveness
 - Ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand the lesson and be able to teach others

Prepare Lesson

- Start a few days early
 - It doesn't work as well if you start at the last minute
 - It gives you a few days to let the Holy Spirit inspire you
- Read the lesson
- Look up the Bible verses and read them in context (with the verses around them)
 - Get the idea of what the Bible passage is talking about
 - Ask yourself, "What is God trying to teach us through these verses?"
- Read through the lesson again
 - Decide how this lesson applies to yourself and your class
 - What sounds really important?
 - Make some notes
 - Think of personal stories or other creative ways to present the Truths of the lesson
 - Think about what you will say, and what you will emphasize
- Make plans for class
 - Gather any necessary items to take with you. For example:
 - Your Bible
 - Your Notes for the lesson
 - Something to "show and tell" to help others understand the message
 - Any materials for activities, games, or arts and crafts
 - NOTE: *If you are planning a craft project, I always suggest trying it out at home first! It helps you to know if it works, and what you will need to do it. And it makes a nice sample for you to show your students!*
- Pray for your class and the lesson

Go To Class

- Welcome
- Pray with and for students
- Be excited! Present the lesson
- Pray, thanking God!
- Activities/ Games or Discussion
- Dismiss

While in Class

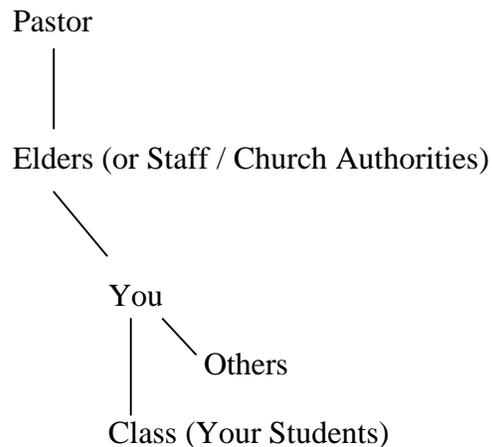
- Have a plan
- Stick to the plan (if at all possible)
- Watch your time
 - Don't allow conversations or other distractions to completely sidetrack you
 - (For instance, don't start talking about things that get off the subject too much)
- If things in class aren't working, switch things up
 - *This is really necessary with children, but it also works with adults*
 - Change positions in classroom
 - Move just yourself or the entire class!
 - This works great with children, sometimes they just need to move
 - Move class to a different place in room (and maybe just sit on the floor)
 - Have the class stand and/or do something
 - Have someone read out loud
 - Ask some "volunteers" to act out part of the story
 - Sing a song
 - Play a quick game
 - Ask the class (or just a few students) a question or two from the lesson
 - Make some other impromptu change (something you think up on the spot)
- If you are working with children, make sure that they see you reading out of the Bible, or that you talk about the verses of scripture being from the Bible.
 - This encourages the students to know that God's Word is for them too
 - It helps them realize that they can look for answers to their questions there
- Always pray with and for your class

Let All Things Be Done... In an Orderly Way

1 Corinthians 14:33 tells us: *For* God is not a God of disorder but of peace —as in all the congregations of the Lord's people. And again in verse 40 it says: But everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.

In every church (or congregation) things need to be done in a fitting and orderly way. There is usually already a hierarchy of responsibility and authority set up.

As a TEACHER, this usually looks something like this, for you:



As you can see, this sort of puts you in the middle... Which is not a bad place to be... You just need to KNOW that you are in the middle, to start with... So that it won't come as a surprise to you later on! ☺

You have AUTHORITY over some things, and there are those who have authority over you.

You are RESPONSIBLE for some things, and there are those who are responsible for you.

If you are an ADMINISTRATOR (a Sunday School Superintendant or Coordinator) then you may have authority over many teachers, but you are still responsible to those who are in authority over you. AND you are also responsible for the teachers who are under your authority.

When you are an administrator, you are REALLY in the middle! ☺

These are good things to know when you get started teaching. It helps to know that you are not alone. There is always someone over you that you can go to if you have a problem or a concern.

It is also good to know that you have some authority in your classroom. This helps you be able to get things done.

You may be in authority over your students, but this is a BIG responsibility as well. NEVER misuse your authority over your students. You must always keep their best interests at heart.

How to Be a Good Teacher

Sometimes people who are going to be a Sunday School teacher are concerned that they don't know enough about the Bible, or that they will make some huge mistake and fail miserably.

These are scary concerns. It makes sense that you might be worried about things like this.

But there are things you can do to help, so that these scary, worrisome things don't happen.

Be Dedicated – Understand that what you are doing is important

Be Dependable – Be there on time and every time, and ready to go, or get a substitute teacher

Be a Student Yourself – Learn the lesson first. Understand it yourself. That way you'll be able to share the lesson and have something to add to it. *Stay at least one step ahead of your class!* 😊

Be Dependent on God – You don't have to know it all. (God does.) The Holy Spirit will help you. Stay humble before God. Pray, asking Him to guide you, to help you, and to give you the words that you need to say. Pray for your students, your class, your church, and yourself.

Be an Example – Apply God's Word to your own life. I suppose that this is where each of us feels we fall short. *It is one thing to teach a truth, it is another thing to live the truth.* But no amount of talking to students (or to anyone else) will convince them of the truth of God's Word, if they do not see it reflected honestly in our lives. This means that we must remain humble before God; reading our Bibles, learning scriptures, honoring Christ, and allowing the Holy Spirit to work through the circumstances in our lives to teach us His truths. In other words, we must grow as Christians ourselves in order to be able to help others grow.

The Lord moves in mysterious ways,

His change to bring about;

While some may work from outside in,

God works from inside out.

SK Chatwell

Look up these verses and read them for yourself. Consider how to apply them to your life.

Romans 12:2 Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

2 Corinthians 10:5 ...take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.

Be a Good Communicator – Keep the flow of information moving! Clear communication always needs to happen back and forth between you and your pastor or staff, and between you and your students. (This is especially true if your students are children! In this case, make sure that you are often in communication **with their parents!**)



Be a Good Record Keeper – Keep accurate records of what you teach. This is very important if you are using various resources for your lessons. Many churches have a set curriculum, with printed books for both students and teachers. But if you do not have these, make sure that you keep track of what you are teaching your class and what Bible verses go along with your lessons. Make a file of some sort with your notes (even if they are handwritten) and keep examples of your artwork and activities for your reference later on.

Someone may ask to see these one of these days, and you will want to be able to produce them without too much difficulty! Plus, you may want to use them yourself later on, and it will be nice to remember what you taught and when.

In addition, you also need to keep records for communication purposes. You will need names and addresses of students (and, if your students are children, of their parents as well.) In this day and age, phone numbers and email addresses are often even more useful.

Also, keep notes on how you did things; both in class and for special events (for example a Christmas program or an Easter skit.) Write down your notes in some logical order, so that others can benefit from your experience and follow your ideas. It will help people who want to do what you did later on.

Be Creative – Think about how you would present a lesson, or do an activity. Leave room for prompting by the Holy Spirit. Don't have all the materials required for someone else's arts and crafts project? Make up your own. See what you have around you and use that. Don't be held captive by ideas typed on a piece of paper; be creative. New motto: Your class – Your way!

Be an Encourager – Encourage your students as you go along. Encourage them to grow closer to Christ, to accept Him as Savior, to learn more about Him, to study His Word, to trust Him because He is faithful, and to be led by His Holy Spirit as they go through their lives.

Be Prayerful – The most important of all. Bring your concerns, your ideas about your lessons and your class regularly before the Lord in prayer. He will bless and lead you! Philippians 4:19 says: "...my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus."

God bless you as you move forward into teaching! May God give you wisdom and insight as you deal with your students and help them learn all that God has for them! Amen

Being Creative

As I write this material for Teachers' Training, I realize that it may be going out to people in different countries all over the world... To people in very different cultures and circumstances.

There are those who will teach their Sunday School classes out in the open, with the whole of Creation available to them to teach their students about God (the Creator.) And there are others who remain trapped in well-lit, air conditioned rooms, hemmed in by mountains of Magic Markers and Flannelgraph. (Brothers and Sisters, we continue to lift you up in prayer. ☺)

Some teachers' only resources will be the Word of God and the Holy Spirit. (And of course, these are enough! Praise God!) But...No matter where you live, or what your circumstances, it is important for you to remember that when you are teaching **you MUST Be Creative.**

You will not always have everything you think you need. You will not always have enough time. You will not always have unlimited funds... in fact you will rarely have unlimited funds!

The point is that you need to **work with what you DO have** and **be as creative as possible.**

FOR EXAMPLE: Let's say you want to teach a lesson about the 12 Disciples. You want to teach the children the Disciples' names and something about each one of them. You have a nice lesson ready, but no real pictures available of the Disciples (mostly because there aren't any) and (thankfully) no Flannelgraph. (Just Kidding!) **What do you do?**

Well, you might get a piece of poster board and a marker and write all of their names on it. Then you could read it to the children and they might be able to copy it down or read it for themselves.

But, how about this? You need something to represent the 12 Disciples, so you go outside and find 12 small rocks; each of different sizes and shapes. Maybe they have different colors as well. You look at the rocks and think about how they might look like the Disciples. Perhaps the biggest one stands for Simon (Peter), or maybe 2 of the rocks that look alike could be James and John, who were brothers. And perhaps for Judas you might choose a rock that crumbles... or even a dirt clod. You get to decide, **because you are being CREATIVE** with your teaching.

So, you gather your students and show them all the rocks one by one, telling them about each disciple as you go along. At the end, you have all 12 sitting there on the ground. The children will be watching attentively, because no one has ever thought to teach them about the Disciples using rocks before. As they are looking at the rocks, you tell them that your favorite one is the rock for Simon (Peter), **because it looks the most like him.** When they ask you why, you tell them, "Because his name (Peter) means 'rock'." Then you laugh... a lot! And your students will look at you and shake their heads, because of your terrible joke. They will not believe that they have such a silly teacher. But they will NEVER forget this lesson about the Disciples, or that Simon Peter's name means "rock," or that Simon Peter's rock **looked just like him!**

Exercise: Memory Verse Games

These are some ideas for learning short memory verses with children. Try them out or make up your own versions that work for your group! *If you have time now, play one of these with a friend. Then read over the Bible verses at the end and think about what they mean.*

- 1.) Erase-A-Word: Write the verse on a board which can be erased. Have the children say the verse together. Erase 1 word. Say the verse again. Keep erasing words and saying the verse. Can you all say it without seeing the words?
- 2.) Hopscotch: Write the memory verse out on cards. Tape them in hopscotch pattern on the floor. Have the children say the words as they hop from one to another (or have them say the whole verse before they start hopping and the reference after they stop hopping.) Have everyone do this a few times.
- 3.) Mix and Fix: Write the verse on cards. Have the children mix up the verse and then spend some time straightening it out. Pair up or have teams to change things up. For very young children, try putting numbers (or some other clue) on each card (with words.)
- 4.) Pass It On: Have the children sit in a circle. Choose one child to hold a special object. (*Like a pillow, a bean bag, a toy, a hat, an unlit candle, a pretend microphone, etc.*) Have that child say the memory verse (repeat it with them if necessary.) Have the child pass the object to someone else. Repeat the process until everyone has done it.
- 5.) Back Words: Write the verse out on cards. Pin the cards on the children's backs. (For younger children put them on their fronts.) Have them line up correctly so that you can say the verse correctly. For fun have the children say their words in order. Switch up and try it all again!
- 6.) Write it My Way: Take turns writing the verse on the board or on paper. Use various colors/ cursive writing/ printing/ block letters/ write in circles or other shapes. Note that the words and the meaning are the same no matter who writes them, or how they are written.
- 7.) Fish: Use 4 different colors of blank cards. Write each word of the verse on all 4 colors of cards. Have the children play "Go Fish" with the cards. Four of one word makes a set. When all the sets are together, put them in order, and read the verse together.

I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. Psalm 119:11(NIV)

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path. Psalm 119:105 (KJV)

More Resources for Teachers – Find them Online!

Sunday School Center – <http://www.Sunday-School-Center.com>

A website dedicated to “*Serving Others, Serving Christ.*” Find free Sunday School materials, including lessons, skits, and other activities for children and youth. This Teacher Training program is provided by Sunday School Center.

Ministry to Children – <http://www.Ministry-to-Children.com>

An excellent website which provides free Sunday School materials, including lessons and teacher ideas for children. If you can't find what you need, be sure to look here!

Young Child Ministries – <http://www.YoungChildMinistries.com>

A remarkable website which provides insight for parents, teachers and administrators into the growth and development of young children; as well as information on what their needs are and suggestions for how to meet those needs. Dr. Christine Gillan Byrne, the author, holds an Ed. D degree in Educational Administration and Leadership. Her website is easy to read and very helpful to anyone wanting to understand more about how to teach and care for young children.

Bible Gateway – <http://www.BibleGateway.com>

A website dedicated to provided free online access to many translations of the Bible. Find dozens of translations of the Bible in English, as well as translations in many different languages. This is very helpful if you are writing lessons and need to quote different Bible verses accurately. Copy and paste the verses directly into your document; reducing the chance of typing errors!

Free Bible Images – <http://www.FreeBibleImages.org>

A great site where you can download free sets of Bible story images in PowerPoint, PDF, Keynote or JPEG formats. Yes, it is absolutely free! They provide fabulous images (pictures) along with Bible references for each one. It is up to the teacher to supply the message!

Skit Guys – <http://www.SkitGuys.com>

Skit Guys is all about skits that you can use with your church group. The skits are excellent and available for purchase at very reasonable prices. The skits written and acted out by the Skit Guys are thoughtful and compelling, and they provide wonderful insight into the Word of God.

Children's Ministry – The Trust Building Business – <http://darrellfraley.com/books.html>

This soft cover edition of Darrell Fraley's book is available for \$8 and is an excellent resource for Children's Ministry administrators. Darrell served as a Children's Minister in Boca Raton, Florida for many years and has written several books. He holds advanced degrees in Theology and Education. In the past has worked as a consultant for David C. Cook and Group Publishers.

Why Do We Have Teacher's Training?

You think when you first become a teacher, that your main concerns will be what to teach and when. And those things are very important. But once those main concerns have been addressed, you still have other issues to deal with. If you prepare yourself in advance for them, and have good staff support, you won't be so surprised (and possibly derailed) by them when they occur.

Satan likes to cause distraction and even destruction if possible. He will use anyone and everyone around you to do so, if he can. (*He may even try to use you!*)

Sounds sad, doesn't it? And it is. However, let us remember what Jesus said: "...*take heart! I have overcome the world.*" (John 16:33) He also said, "*I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.*" (Matthew 10:16)

In other words, be gentle and kind, but **keep your eyes open** and **watch your back!** Make plans and provision, just in case the unexpected happens. And, of course, when you are working with children, you have to be especially carefully and wise.

If you are in charge of teachers, you have to teach them about these things; instructing them and warning them. New teachers don't know all of this. But they will eventually run into these problems. You can either help them now, or you can help them later. But by then they may have become confused, discouraged, or even disillusioned. You don't want to lose a good teacher, just because you didn't prepare them in advance. Knowing what to do, when problems arise, will help them greatly!

Think about it; if you start a new job, the place where you are working teaches you the things you need to know. They may even devote days or weeks training you to do your new job. This is to help protect you, the clients, and the company (or job) itself. Training helps ensure that you are effective, that the clients get what they need, and that the company succeeds.

In churches, all too often, we think to ourselves, "Why should we do any training? It won't really make much difference. Everything will work out alright in the end, no matter what." And, why not? God is in charge, we are doing His will, and the Holy Spirit is present; therefore, we think, everything will be OK. And we are right. After all, in the end God wins! Praise God!

However, in the meantime, damage can be done, ministries can be unhinged, and people can be driven away from the truth and a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. **Better safe, than sorry.**

Therefore... *be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Matthew 10:16*

And that's why Teachers' Training is so important.

Read the Bible Verses on the next page together. Discuss how they apply to being a Sunday School teacher and/or to Teacher's Training.

Bible Verses for Teaching and Teachers' Training

Why do we Teach?

Great Commission

Matthew 28:18-20 Then Jesus came to them and said, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*"

Gift of Teaching

1 Corinthians 12:27-30 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And God has placed in the church first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, of helping, of guidance, and of different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret?

God Prepared Good Works in Advance for Us to Do

Ephesians 2: 10 For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Why do we Use the Bible to Teach?

All Scripture is God-Breathed

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Why do we Need to Keep Learning?

To be taken forward to maturity

Hebrews 6:1 Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity...

Why do we have Teachers' Training?

Teachers' Training offers Counsel and Advice from Teachers to Teachers

Proverbs 15:22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

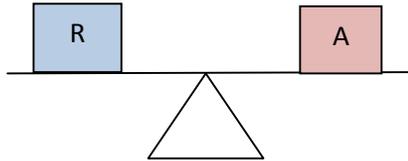
Proverbs 12:15 The way of fools seems right to them, but the wise listen to advice.

Proverbs 19:20 Listen to advice and accept discipline, and at the end you will be counted among the wise.

Balancing Authority and Responsibility

If you are going to do a job (any job) you need to have Authority commensurate with the Responsibility you have been given, in order to accomplish the job.

Imagine it like a board balanced in its middle (like a see-saw), with two boxes on either side.

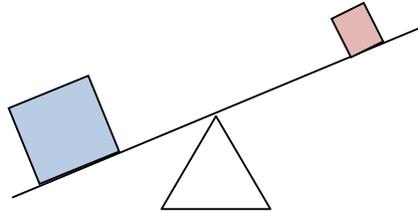


As long as Responsibility and Authority are basically balanced, things usually go along well. People are happy in their jobs, and the job (in this case teaching others) gets done.

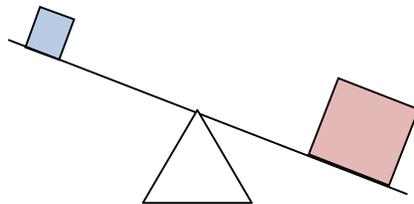
However, if Responsibility and Authority become unbalanced, then problems usually appear. People become unhappy in their jobs, and the job (teaching) begins to suffer.

Generally there are two extremes that should be guarded against.

If you have lots of Responsibility and no Authority; then you are a “Slave.”



If you have lots of Authority and no Responsibility; then you are a “Dictator.”



(Not that you would actually become a slave or a dictator; but you get the general idea. ☺)

It is best to keep things balanced. In the case of teaching, if a teacher is asked to be in charge of a classroom, that teacher should be allowed to make some of the decisions regarding the class.

Examples of Balancing Authority and Responsibility

Let's look at two examples of balancing Responsibility and Authority. Read the example and its question and then talk about it together. Finally read the discussion answer. (*Your answers may not be the same as the discussion answer! That's just fine! The idea is to understand that authority and responsibility need to be balanced, so that you can more easily do your job!*)

Example #1- You are a Teacher. You have a curriculum. The kids in your classroom did not fully understand last week's lesson. You want to review that lesson again this week, before starting another lesson.

Question: Should you have the Authority to make this decision? Why or why not?

Answer: *Yes, you should have the Authority to make this routine decision in your own classroom. You know your students best, and you know what they do and do not understand. You have a Responsibility to help your students learn and understand the truths of God's Word. You ALSO have a Responsibility to get through the curriculum in a timely fashion. You may want to check with your Supervisor about it, but the Supervisor would be well-advised to allow you to decide what to do.*

Example #2 – You are a Supervisor. And a Teacher keeps falling behind in the curriculum.

Question: You have both Authority and Responsibilities. What are these and what are you going to do about them?

Answer: *You are Responsible, to the Pastor/ Elder Board, to make sure that the curriculum is covered in a timely fashion. You should have the Authority to talk to the teacher and encourage him/her to move faster. However, in your position of Authority, you are ALSO Responsible to the Teacher! Ask some questions: Does the teacher need support? Is there a problem in the classroom? Or does the teacher simply feel that his/her class needs more time with the lessons.*

After talking with the teacher, perhaps you will also need to talk with the persons in authority over you. What needs to happen next? Does the teacher need help? Do you need to move or replace a teacher? (Or maybe the curriculum is just too hard! Perhaps it needs to be amended or changed altogether.) Whatever the case, you must have the Authority to intervene in this situation and to help correct it.

These examples show how Responsibility and Authority work best if they are balanced.

Remember that we are all parts of the Body of Christ, and that we are to be encouraging one another, building up one another, and helping each other, as we exercise authority and are responsible to one another, in an orderly and fair fashion.

Discipline in the Classroom

NOTE: Refer to your church's policy on discipline in the classroom. Whatever it says there, is what you need to do. If you have questions about what you can and cannot do in class, as far as correcting children or encouraging good behavior, you should ask your immediate Supervisor.

In general any discipline (or correction) that you do in class has to be appropriate and it has to make sense to the kids, or else they will consider you unfair, and then you've lost them. For example: It's not fair to punish the whole class just because one child is misbehaving. Say that a 12 year old is misbehaving during a game or activity. Ask that child to sit out for the rest of that game or activity. The child can try again later.

You really do have to be able to teach in your classroom. But, sometimes the behavior of a single child can become so disruptive that you can't have class at all. (*Been there, done that.*)

My number one rule is: **Don't get mad, get help!**

Add more adults to your classroom. If certain children are repeatedly disruptive, add adults assigned specifically to them. More serious problems may require more serious interventions.

Remember that the time you have in Sunday School (usually less than 1 hour a week) may limit your ability to significantly impact the behavior of any child.

Being Pro-Active (Preventing Bad Behavior... as best you can!)

It's important to be energetic and excited about your classes and what you are teaching. This helps get students interested and involved. Interested and involved students are MUCH LESS likely to create discipline problems, than if they are bored and disinterested.

You may have to try a few new things. Be innovative about your teaching. If something isn't working in class, you can even try to change something on the spot. Some ideas include:

- Moving around in the classroom
- Starting a new activity or game
- Involving students in telling (or acting out) the story
 - Drag some "volunteers" up from the group to help you
- Asking a few silly questions and awarding thousands of "points" to the "team" that gets them right.
- Cut your losses and move on to the next thing you had planned

Remember that children have limited attention spans. Limit the time spent on any one activity.

Replacing Fear with Trust

Sometimes students do not want to participate in class because they are afraid: Afraid of looking bad in front of their friends; or of being ridiculed; or of being picked on by others. Sometimes they are even afraid of being picked on by the teacher! (We can't have that!)

Fear can keep students from sharing their ideas in class, or even from asking questions. Fear can make it almost impossible for students to learn, or to do much of anything else, in class. Since they are too afraid to share and to learn, these students often get bored and are indifferent in class. This can lead to poor classroom behavior, including things like: repeatedly changing the subject, trying to take over the conversations, ignoring what is going on in class, being disrespectful, causing problems with other students, and generally disrupting the class.

You don't want any of this. And it can happen, believe it or not, whether you are working with children, teens, or even... wait for it... adults! (That's right... I've seen it happen.)

To deal with this problem, it is necessary to start by discussing it and getting it out in the open. Talk about how in class you must be able to trust each other or nothing good will come of it. Say that you are going to trust the students and that you want them to trust you (and each other.)

Explain that you will try to be worthy of their trust. You will not tease them or laugh at them if they don't understand something. You also do not want anyone in class to pick on others if they don't know an answer, or if they have a question. If it seems like this might still be a problem, explain that NO ONE wants to be laughed at, when they ask a question or don't know an answer. (Remember the Golden Rule: Do to others as you would have them do to you.)

In addition, it is important that if someone shares a confidence in the class (or in a small group) the confidence generally should not be repeated outside of class.

Students, especially children, want to be worthy of the trust and respect that you offer them. (It is an important thing to them.) Explain that, if they do something to lose your trust, things will be different after that. Trust, when lost, takes a long time to regain. However, students should be allowed a chance to earn your trust again. Explain that if they do something to break your trust, your relationship will still be ok, but it will not be as good as it could have been, if it hadn't been broken in the first place

Our classrooms should be nice, safe places. Make every effort to encourage trust and respect in your classroom. Do not allow bad behavior, but address it as you go, encouraging people to return to the subject at hand, to listen to others as they speak, and not to mock or tease others.

Eventually the students themselves will get the idea and encourage their peers to go along with the plan of replacing fear with trust. Your room will become a virtual oasis, where students feel safe. Recommended Resource: "Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire," © Rafe Esquith, 2007.

Dealing with (very) Poorly Disciplined Students

NOTE: Refer to your church's policy on discipline in the classroom. Whatever it says there, is what you need to do. If you have questions about what you can and cannot do in class, as far as correcting children or encouraging good behavior, you should ask your immediate Supervisor.

- First of All... Remember... They aren't your kids!
 - Which means that you can't necessarily discipline them the way you would, if they *were* your kids ☺
- Next... Talk with your supervisors
 - Send this up the line... Don't even think about trying to handle this problem alone
- If YOU are the supervisor
 - Pray
 - Talk with staff / pastor as necessary (again you may want to send this up the line)
 - Finally... talk with parents
- Options with Parents:
 - Unfortunately, poorly behaved kids often have challenging or difficult parents.
 - The families are often dysfunctional (They do not function or "work" well.)
 - Often it is a good idea just to invite a parent to attend class with their child
 - However, sometimes this can cause even more problems!
- Other Options:
 - Alternatively, consider removing the child from class for a certain period of time (a week or two, minimum – depending on the behavior that has occurred)
 - After the time period is ended, allow the child back in class ONLY with a parent (or another supervising adult) present, for a set period of weeks or months
 - Try to pair the child with a positive adult role model
 - Make every effort to help the child improve his/her behavior in a positive way
 - Verbally recognize efforts at appropriate behavior
 - Encourage participation in activities that the child finds interesting
 - Help provide peer mentoring, if possible
 - When the child is more familiar and comfortable with his/her surroundings AND behavior has improved, try having the child in class without the supervising adult
 - REPEAT this process as necessary
 - If the child stops coming to class, every effort should be made to continue to reach out to the child and the family; often by staff or other church leaders

Again, these are just suggestions. Please follow the Official Policy and Procedures of your church.

An EXTRA SPECIAL NOTE from Sharon:

Sometimes the problem in the classroom isn't the kids... Sometimes the problem is YOU! ☺

Don't feel bad. It can happen to any of us. Sometimes you're working with the wrong age group. Sometimes you don't have enough help in class. Sometimes you've just been at it for too long. Whatever the problem, it's important to figure it out, and to know when to make a change.

Take me, for instance: I now know that I prefer working with younger children. I am IN AWE of teachers, who work well with children 12-18. (I admire their patience, their energy, and their light-hearted attitudes.) But, over time, I have come to realize that I cannot do what they do.

My answer to this... I only work in classrooms with younger children. I do other things to help out with older groups, but I don't volunteer to help with classes or activities, or go on any field trips or outings with them. And now, because of that, things go along very nicely.

It's important to know when things aren't working out for you. Some signs of distress are:

- Lots of behavioral problems in class
- You find yourself "yelling" or "losing your cool" in class
- Kids don't seem to be having fun in class
- Kids stop coming to class or won't bring their friends
- Complaints from kids (and/or their parents)
- Complaints, or concerns, voiced by other teachers or staff
- Disciplinary action taken by supervisors or staff members

Recognize these warning signs. Don't let things get worse. Don't let bad things happen.

- Make some changes! Try one or more of the following:
 - Talk to someone you trust about the problems (pastor/ staff/ another teacher)
 - Get some extra help in your classroom
 - Let someone else teach a while, and you help them
 - Take a break for a while (vacation, sabbatical, or just a few weeks away)
 - Switch classrooms, or work with a different age group altogether
 - If you are having personal problems, get help (seek counseling)
 - Consider serving in another area at church, instead of teaching, for a while
 - Resign or Retire. *(All journeys end! Thank God for the opportunity to serve!)*

I am sure that none of this applies to you. You are probably the best teacher ever. However, anyone (*no matter how wonderful a teacher they are*) can have problems. And whatever those problems are, they deserve appropriate attention! If you notice these signs of distress, either in yourself or in someone else around you, TALK to someone. *God bless you. And thank you for your faithful service to God and to His Kingdom!*

- Sharon

Dealing with Problems (or Emergencies) in the Classroom

No matter what, you will occasionally run into problems (or even emergencies) in your classroom. These may range from simple issues (like not having the materials for an art project) to more serious situations (like storm warnings.) The important thing is to **know what to do**.

NOTE: As always, if there is imminent danger to a person or persons in your classroom, take quick action to prevent injury or loss of life. If indicated, leave the classroom and get everyone to a safe location. Notify appropriate authorities or call emergency services, as necessary.

Remember to routinely review the emergency procedures at your church. Know what to do and where to go in case of Fire/ Tornado/ or other Emergency. (The time to look at the Policy and Procedures Notebook is on a nice, quiet day at home, NOT during an actual emergency!) ☺

- Stay calm.
 - No matter what happens, remember to stay calm. (Especially when children are involved.) If you panic, the children may panic as well. If you get overly upset, the children will mirror your agitation, and it will be harder for you to help them.
 - Remember - your behavior is key in helping to solve the problem, no matter how big or little the problem may be.
- Assess the situation.
 - Is this something that **MUST** be addressed right now?
 - If so, deal with it in an appropriate manner
 - If not, perhaps you could take care of it better after class
 - Does someone else need to be notified about the problem?
 - If so, determine who that person is and notify them
 - It may be that someone else, with more authority than you, needs to make the decision about what to do in this particular situation
- Talk with others.
 - Sometimes you encounter a routine problem in class and you don't really know what to do about it. In these cases, it is always best to talk to someone else.
 - Know who you are supposed to talk to if problems arise in your classroom
 - Most churches already have a "chain of command" for Sunday School
 - Usually there is someone over your class, or even over all of the classes
 - Find out who these persons are. Get to know them, so that when you have a problem you will be able to locate them and talk about it.
 - Remember, most problems have happened before, so someone will probably have some good advice for you!
- Take action as necessary.
- Keep records, receipts, and any other paperwork, especially if you have to pay for something in order to fix a problem or to provide for a need in your classroom.

Sunday School Learning Centers

The use of CENTERS is a teaching approach, which can be done effectively in Sunday School, Children's Church, Vacation Bible School, and other church settings.

The concept is that children truly want to learn new things, and Learning Centers allow them to do self-directed "play" or "work" in a prepared environment to learn things at their own pace.

The classroom is arranged so that there are several separate areas or "centers" where the children can spend time studying or exploring different ideas. Children are then invited to move about from one center to another, choosing their activities based on their own interests and abilities.

The children "learn" about the things they are studying as they participate in the activities at each center. The learning is self-directed because the children choose which center to visit, how long to stay there, and how often they will return to the same center. In this way children explore and learn about a concept at their own rate, until they are ready to move on to something else.

CENTERS can be done **informally** (For instance: Putting certain blocks in a basket on the floor and books on a shelf to read, in different parts of the room) or **formally** (For instance: Having tables and chairs with 1-2 activities to do at each table) or **somewhere in between**.

It is often challenging to use centers during Sunday School, because of the limited amount of time in those classes (typically less than an hour.) The children have less time to move around freely from one center to another. However, during VBS, Centers can work very well, especially in younger children's classrooms (5 years old or less.) This is because Centers offer some variety for these children, and because it is more like "directed play" than having the usual "playtime." But, with effort and planning, Centers can succeed with older children, even in Sunday School.

How to Set up Learning Centers in Your Classroom

Set up discreet areas around your classroom, with various activities in each area, inviting the children to visit them. You may need to give specific instructions about how to do some of the activities. Limit the number of children allowed at each center at one time. You may want to say, "*If there's a spot available at the table, you may move there.*" Set aside a certain amount of time for Centers, after which the children will come back together for group activities. One of the Centers could be a "Snack Area," but be sure to offer something simple, like crackers and water. Otherwise, all of the children will want to crowd around it *at the same time!* 😊

The types of Centers in your classroom need to vary with the age of the children, their abilities and interests, and possibly with what you have been studying in class. At each Center there needs to be something to see and explore, or something to do and learn from. Be imaginative, and use the resources and materials you have available, to create innovative and fun Centers.

Here are some ideas...

IDEAS FOR CENTERS for children 4-7 years of age

Reading Center – A quiet, comfortable area with small chairs (or even bean-bag chairs), where the children can relax and read books. If no chairs are available, you can use blankets on the floor, or even big boxes with the top and one side cut out of them, and pillows inside of them.

Writing Center – A table with chairs where children can practice the fundamentals of writing. Provide large letters for the children to trace with their fingers. Allow them to write their letters on a piece of paper. Let the children practice writing their names, either printing or using cursive. Provide a picture of something, with its name written under it. Let the child write the name of the thing pictured as well. Have a place to display all of the children's written names.

Scissor Center – Safety scissors are used to make cuts on pieces of paper with lines on them. The designs on the paper should range from easy to more difficult. First have them cut along a straight line towards a dot at the center of the page. Later move to curved lines and zigzag lines.

Magnify Me Center – Provide plastic magnifying glasses for the children to look through. Allow them to look at various objects. Ideas include: Seashells, rocks, pine cones, leaves, and insects. Let the children draw what they see through the magnifying glass.

Sandbox Center – Provide a low flat plastic box with a layer of clean sand in it. (Put a sheet or tarp under it, so the sand doesn't go everywhere.) Draw letters or numbers in either dry or wet sand. Erase the sand with your hand. "Find" things hidden in the dry sand, using your hands, or a sieve. (*Little plastic rings are fun to find!*) Alternatively provide cups, or a shovel and pail, so that children can practice scooping up the sand and pouring it from one container to another.

"Walk the Line" Center – Put a line on the floor (with tape or something) and ask the children to walk on the line without "falling off." Can you do it heel to toe? Can you do it going sideways?

Water Center – (This Center probably works best outside in the summer!) Bring lots of towels (and maybe even some extra clothes) on this day. Provide a sink, a small dishpan, or a bucket full of water. Also provide plastic pitchers, pans, cups, and even measuring cups. Pour water carefully from a pitcher to a cup and back again. Learn to measure 1 cup, ½ cup, teaspoons, etc.

"Sink or Float" Center – An extension of the Water Center. Provide a small pool or bucket of water. Also provide various objects like: tin foil, small blocks of wood, wooden spoons, and metal spoons. See if the items sink or float. (Test their buoyancy.) Allow the children to shape a boat from the tin foil. Will it float? What shape of boat floats the best?

OTHER IDEAS:

Bubbles	Markers	Stickers	Stamping	Tie a Bow	Learning Shapes
Coloring	Hand Washing	Counting	Writing	Button a Button	

IDEAS FOR CENTERS for children 8-11 years old

Reading Center – Have a quiet comfortable area where children can read. Be creative with this area. Consider hanging sheets to make it seemed “walled off”. Or let children read under tables, while sitting on pillows. Provide books appropriately challenging for their ages.

Sewing Center – Learn to thread a needle. Use an embroidery hoop (with fabric in it) to try out different stitches. Progress to sewing on a button.

Bible Work Center – Learn about the Bible. Read directions explaining that the Bible is made in two parts (Old and New Testaments). Learn about the different books of the Bible. Practice saying or memorizing their names. Look up different Bible verses. Write them down.

Make a Card Center – Use heavy paper, markers, stencils, cut outs, stickers and pictures to make a card for someone special, or for an upcoming holiday.

Game Center – Play different quiet games (checkers, chess, or other types of board games) with one or two other persons.

Bible Verse Center – Work memorizing the Bible verse of the day. It will be written down on some paper at the Center. Read it. Write it down. Say it to yourself or others. Take the words of the verse, which are written down on note cards, mix them up, and put them in the right order.

Map Center – Look at maps of the area where today’s lesson happened. Did the person in the story take a journey? If so, show with your finger where the person went to on his/her trip. Learn north, south, east, and west on the map. How far is it from one place to another?

Five Senses Center – Smell different smells in bottles. (Such as spices and flavorings) What are they? Did you guess correctly? Now look at salt and sugar. Do they look the same? Do they taste the same? Feel things with different textures. Which ones are rough, smooth, or prickly? Put your hand in a sack and feel objects of differing shapes. What are the objects? Can you tell (without looking) what the objects are? Listen to different sounds. What do you hear?

Magnifying Glass Center – Use a magnifying glass to look at different objects up close. Be very careful with the magnifying glass. It is very precious. Look at rocks, seashells, insects, flowers, leaves, pine cones, etc. Remember that God made everything in nature! How good God is!

Painting Center – Use paints to learn about different colors. Primary colors are red, yellow, and blue. *(They cannot be made by mixing other colors together, but you can make any other color by mixing different amounts of these three colors together.)* Learn how to make green, orange, and purple. How do you make brown? Paint different colored squares on a piece of paper. Write the names of the colors. Can you create a new color of your own and give it a name?

OTHER IDEAS: Listening to Music Drawing Poetry Science Math

Abilities by Age (Children)

Children grow up very quickly. They always seem to be changing! Sometimes it can be difficult to keep up with them! Being aware of how they grow and develop can help us as we plan for their care and comfort in our classrooms. It can also help us understand how to better plan and present our lessons and activities.

Each child, as it grows, develops physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. What follows is a brief discussion of how children typically grow in each of these areas. This list is not all-inclusive and is meant only to help guide you as a teacher.

Children – Birth to 2 years

- Changing rapidly with increasing age
- Learning about themselves and close family
- Learning language (hearing and then speaking)
- Learning to move around and walk
- Learning to follow simple commands
- Learning to trust
- In the Classroom:
 - Create a positive atmosphere (Lots of love!)
 - Sing songs to the children
 - Clap hands together
 - Repeat words and then short phrases
 - May want to have soft music in classroom.
- Children this age enjoy individual play with adult watching or participating
- Spiritual Messages they need to hear:
 - You are loved.
 - God loves you.
 - God loves your Mommy and Daddy.

Children – 2-3 Years Old

- Exploring and learning about the world around them
 - Often explore things by trying to put them in their mouths (be careful!)
- Developing large motor skills (leg and upper arms)
 - Perfecting walking
 - Running and jumping
 - Climbing
- Talking
 - Learning to use complete sentences
 - Lots of questions and answers
- Learning shapes, colors, names of things

- Children this age enjoy individual play, side-by-side in a room with others
 - Blocks, simple puzzles, dolls, stuffed animals, balls
- Can do some small group activities for short periods of time
- Spiritual Messages they Need to Hear
 - God Loves you
 - God loves your family
 - God made everything
 - Jesus loves you
 - We can Pray
 - God is...(Good/ Truthful/ Caring)

Children – 3-4 Years Old

- Learning how they relate to their family (and to people outside of their family)
- Learning to separate from family members for short, predictable periods of time
- Learning to tell stories of their own, using more than one sentence or thought
- Learning numbers in sequence, and how to count small objects
- Learning the alphabet and simple songs
- Perfecting large motor skills (legs and upper arms)
 - Running, Jumping, Climbing
 - Standing on one foot/ balancing
 - Walking up and down stairs
 - Dancing, Hopping, Marching
 - Kicking a ball, throwing a ball
- Developing fine motor skills (hand and fingers)
 - Clapping hands, picking up small objects, early coloring
 - Working with clay / Play-Doh, very early drawing, Finger-painting
 - Early writing and tracing skills
 - Songs with hand and finger motions
 - Very early work with things like scissors and glue (with lots of supervision! ☺)
- Children in this age group enjoy these types of play:
 - imagining things and “pretend” play
 - playing in groups of 2 or 3 children their own age
 - playing games with larger groups of children for short periods of time
 - exploring new sounds, textures, colors, smells, tastes
 - sorting by color, shape, size, and similarities
- Hearing and Understanding Bible Stories
 - Able to listen to and understand short Bible Stories
 - Able to remember main person in story
 - Able to remember and repeat a few main points in story
- Very concrete in their thinking

- Spiritual Messages they Need to Hear
 - God cares about you and your family (mother/father/brothers/sisters/etc)
 - God made everything.
 - God/Jesus loves you.
 - God made you.
 - You are special and unique (and valuable to God and others.)
 - God hears our Prayers.
 - God is... (Dependable, Trustworthy, Always Good)
 - There is a difference between Right and Wrong

Children – 4-7 Years Old

- Learning how they relate to God, to family members, and to other people in the world
- Learning more and more about the world (outside of home) and what it is like
- Learning to separate from family members for extended periods of time in a day
 - Learning new skills to help take care of themselves when away from family
 - Building confidence in their new abilities
 - Making friends (outside of family members and other familiar people)
- Learning to read, but usually not yet “fluent” readers
 - For purposes of curriculum, this age group is referred to as “Pre-Readers”
 - Learning to write name well
 - Learning to write all of the letters
 - Learning to read, write, and copy individual words and short sentences or phrases
 - Learning the fundamentals of spelling
- Learning about numbers and arithmetic
 - Counting numbers, and learning to write numbers (up to 10, 100, and 1000+)
 - Learning to do Addition and Subtraction
 - Multiplication and Division introduced (or taught)
 - Early mathematical word problems
 - Q. Fred has two apples, if he gives you one, how many will he have left?
 - A. None... Fred ate his apple! 😊 (*Just kidding!*) Real Answer: One
- Perfecting large motor skills (legs and upper arms)
 - Running, Jumping, Climbing, Standing on one foot/ balancing
 - Rhythmic Movements such as: Dancing, Hopping, Marching
 - Complex skills such as: kicking a ball to someone else, throwing a ball into something, batting a ball, running a race with others, jumping rope, etc
- Perfecting fine motor skills (hand and fingers)
 - Clapping hands, Snapping fingers, Picking up and working with small objects
 - Coloring (simple to complex drawings) with crayons and markers
 - Drawing stick-figures, persons, animals, things, and places (house, etc.)
 - Finger-painting, and eventually Painting with a brush

- Creating objects with clay / Play-Doh
- Songs with more and more complex hand and finger motions
- Writing letters, numbers, name, words, and later short phrases or sentences
- Children in this age group enjoy these types of play:
 - imagining things and “pretend” play
 - playing in progressively larger groups of children for longer periods of time
 - discovering more about sounds, textures, colors, smells, tastes
 - Working with paint, colors, markers, glue, scissors, string, yarn and other media
 - Playing simple instruments: drums, cymbals, bells, etc. (Usually very **loudly!**)
 - Singing familiar songs as a group
 - Dancing, marching, and moving to music
 - Simple games that require some new skill
 - Acting out stories and re-telling stories
- Spiritual Messages they Need to Hear
 - God loves you.
 - God loves everyone. (Family, friends, neighbors.)
 - God made everything perfectly.
 - God knows you.
 - God made you special and unique
 - You are valuable to God and to others.
 - God hears our Prayers.
 - God is... (Dependable, Trustworthy, Always Good)
 - There is a difference between Right and Wrong
 - God has been involved with us through history.
 - God has a plan for the future.
 - Jesus is God's Son.
 - Jesus loves you.
 - Sometimes we sin (We choose to do things that we know are wrong/bad).
 - Reassure child that we all make mistakes. Mistakes are not the same as “sins.”
 - Jesus came to pay for all our sins.
 - Because of what Jesus did for us, we can live with Him forever.
 - We can accept Jesus as our Savior.
- Hearing and Understanding Bible Stories
 - Able to understand (and answer questions about) the main points of story
 - With Timeline, better able to understand how stories go together historically
 - Beginning to understand abstract concepts such as: self-sacrifice, love for others, faith, doubt, sin, guilt, and forgiveness.
- Learn to pray together

Children – 8-10 Years Old

- Goals for this age
 - Accepting self; learning about strengths and gifts
 - Making friends; learning to get along with others
 - Understanding that we are all different – accepting differences
- Beginning to learn about their role in society, responsibilities to family, friends
- Early Readers – Able to read with increasing ease/ Reading for information
 - Learning to look things up in the Bible
 - Able to copy passages from Bible or textbook
 - Able to answer written questions with short answers or sentences.
 - Play written word games
 - Learning to write paragraphs and give oral reports
- Learning to do different types of chores and work at home and school
- Can play complex group games and even competitive sports (soccer, baseball, volleyball)
- Fine Motor Skills
 - Very good with scissors and glue
 - Can do detailed decorations, complex craft projects
 - Can learn basic sewing, knitting, crocheting, baking, cooking, etc
 - Can learn to use a hammer, screwdriver, saw, etc
 - Can learn basic “camping skills” – Putting up tent/ planning a meal/ starting a fire
- Can do word puzzles and play math games (memorizing multiplication tables)
- Memorizing sections of scripture (Examples: 23rd Psalm, Lord’s Prayer, Beatitudes)
- Memorize books of the Bible, names of disciples
- Learn to Pray together and individually
- Can begin to understand historical overview of the Bible
- Spiritual Messages they need to hear
 - Salvation message
 - We can accept Jesus as our Savior.
 - God loves you and everyone else that you know and meet
 - God knows all about you and loves you just like you are
 - God has a wonderful plan for your life
 - God will never leave you or forsake you
 - You can trust God
 - God is all powerful, all knowing, and always present
 - There is nothing you can do to make God love you any more than He does
 - There is nothing you can do to make God love you any less than He does
 - Jesus is The Way.
 - We are saved by grace (because God is generous), not by works (or what we do)
 - You can tell others what God has done for you

Children – 10-12 Year Olds

- Goals for this age
 - Accepting self; learning more about strengths and gifts
 - Making friends; learning to get along with others well
 - Learning techniques to resolve conflict and to handle own emotions
 - Understanding that we are all different – accepting differences
- Proficient Readers – can read very well either silently or out loud
 - Read for self-enjoyment and relaxation
 - Read for information
 - Able to use information to write reports/ papers
 - Find answers to questions and write them down using paragraphs
- Children this age enjoy this type of play:
 - Complex, thoughtful games such as chess, checkers, and other board games
 - Team games/ competitive sports and athletic events
 - Learn importance of and enforce safety measures for games and activities
 - Complex arts and craft work, as well as other complex skills
 - Paintings/ sculpture/ beadwork/ leatherwork/ t-shirts/ sewing projects
 - Cooking meals/ doing laundry/ cleaning / building small projects
 - These activities mirror adult type activities and help child learn life skills
- Encourage participation in group chores in classroom
 - Cleaning up area each week
 - Preparing and serving snacks to group
 - Taking turns doing other chores
 - Teaching responsibility for self and others in group situation
- Practice service to others
 - Encourage group projects to help the elderly, sick, infirm, or needy
 - Work with younger children/ mentoring them/ encouraging them
 - Supervise younger children (with some adult oversight)
- Pray together or individually; also lead group in prayer
- Bible drills/ Bible passage memorization/ write down favorite verses
- Encourage treating others kindly, both in and out of class
 - Discuss 1 Corinthians 13 “*Love is patient, love is kind...*”
 - Learn that Jesus commands us to “*love one another.*”
 - Discuss and practice treating others with love
 - Discuss ways of resolving conflict in peaceful and mature ways
 - Speaking the truth in love
 - Expressing frustration and anger with calm words, seeking a resolution
 - EX: When ____ happens, and you do _____, I feel _____.
 - “When we are sitting together, and you pinch me, I feel sad and angry.”

- Encourage spiritual disciplines of praying/ giving offerings/ reading Bible
- Able to understand more “abstract” ideas, such as:
 - Holy Trinity
 - Atonement for Sin
 - Holy Spirit leading us into all truth
 - Prophecy – which foretells the future
 - Old and New Covenants
- Provide a broad overview of whole Bible
 - Finding out how the Bible all ties together historically
 - The Bible tells about Jesus from beginning to end
 - Learn about the different books in the Bible
 - Who wrote different parts of the Bible and why
- Also use Bible to help provide deep answers to specific questions
 - Who is Jesus?
 - Why did Jesus come?
 - Why/How does God love me?
 - What am I supposed to do with my life?
- Spiritual Messages they need to hear
 - Salvation message
 - We can accept Jesus as our Savior.
 - Children this age may wish to accept Jesus as their Savior
 - God loves you and everyone else that you know and meet
 - God knows all about you and loves you just like you are
 - God has a wonderful plan for your life
 - God will never leave you or forsake you
 - You can trust God
 - God is all powerful, all knowing, and always present
 - There is nothing you can do to make God love you any more than He does
 - There is nothing you can do to make God love you any less than He does
 - Jesus is The Way.
 - We are saved by grace (because God is generous), not by works (or what we do)
 - You can tell others what God has done for you

Abilities by Age (Youth / Teens) – 12-18 Years Old

Teens are on the exciting (and sometimes challenging) journey from childhood into adulthood. It is during this important period of time that they begin to “break away” from their parents and become individually functioning adults. (Sometimes this goes smoothly, and sometimes it does not.) But as one of the important persons in their lives during this period, YOU as their Sunday School teacher must know as much as possible about what they are going through during this stage of their life, so that you can interact with them in more helpful and meaningful ways.

Here are some of the important things going on in their lives during this time period...

- Learning that “I am a person, who is becoming an independent adult in society.”
 - Usually they are terrified
 - They are wondering if they will be accepted by their peers (friends)
 - They are wondering if they will be alright on their own one day
 - More than anything they want to be accepted and loved, no matter what
- Physical Growth and Development now includes moving toward sexual maturity
 - This throws in a whole host of new feelings, which may be confusing
- Time when they make their faith their own (or possibly abandon it altogether)
 - Not their parents’ faith, or their teachers’ faith, but their own faith
 - They have questions/ doubts
 - Occasionally their doubts are quite disturbing to them (or to their parents)
 - If so... Stay calm. Encourage questions.
 - Rejoice with them that they are going through this process.
 - (Even though it is difficult!)
 - Reassure them that you are certain they will find their answers
 - (Because God is there, and He is very, very faithful)
 - Be supportive of the child during this process
- Application of Bible Truths
 - This age group asks (like Pontius Pilate asked Jesus) “What is truth?”
 - They want to know if they can believe the things you are teaching them
 - They want to know if they can trust what the Bible says is true
 - Whether or not they say any of this out loud, they are still thinking it
 - They want to know that God really cares about them as an individual
- Teenage Characteristics
 - May consider themselves indestructible; but actually they can be quite fragile
 - May consider themselves (or their friends) to be right all of the time
 - They are “*often wrong, but never in doubt.*”
 - They engage in thoughtful discussions of moral issues, philosophical issues
 - They want to understand why people say one thing, but do another
 - Often frustrated by this sort of behavior in friends, relatives, society

- Questions teens need the answers to:
 - How do I relate to God?
 - What does that mean to my life?
 - How am I supposed to live my life?
 - If God's going to judge me, how do I want to live?
 - What gets me saved? (Only what Jesus did for me.)
 - Our behavior (even our good behavior) is NOT what saves us.
 - Why be good? (Jesus said, *"If you love me, you will obey my commands."*)
- Things Teens need to learn to do
 - Read the Bible themselves, especially to find out truths
 - Read the Bible a LOT as a class or small group
 - My absolute favorite quote about bringing your Bible to class, is from my friend, Mr. Calvin R., an award-winning teacher, who once told a group of students:
 - *"I want you to have your Bible with you every time you come to class. Because if you have it with you, then it's more likely to fall open. And if it falls open, then we are more likely to read something out of it. And if we read something out of it, then we might just learn something."*
- Spiritual Truths they Need to Hear
 - Teens are able to learn and understand profound truths from the Word of God
 - They have a keen sense of right and wrong, and desire justice
 - They are very idealistic, and are often disturbed when things don't work out right
 - They need to learn that God can be trusted at His Word
 - That He loves them and cares for them
 - That He has a plan for their lives
 - That they can trust Him to always be there for them, no matter what
 - That God's way is the best way

As difficult as this age can be, it is a VERY important age, because if teens don't figure out these things (how they fit into the world and relate to God) at this age, then they risk carrying all of their confusion and insecurities into adulthood; and risk becoming poorly functioning adults.

Therefore, it is crucial that you WORK HARD with teens, to help them through this tough time.

Other Ideas for Working with Youth (Teens)

Here are some hints from my good friend, Lynn M. a wonderful teacher of 12-14 year olds:

- Consider separating boys and girls into different small groups during discussion times
 - But, *“only if you want them to talk or to learn anything.”*
 - Lynn’s reasoning for recommending small groups: People of this age *“often find members of the opposite sex so distracting that you can’t get them to talk about anything important, if they are together in mixed groups.”*
- Provide a nice, safe, place where they can burn off some of their excess energy
 - Lots of FUN games
 - Encourage activities outside
 - Organize service projects that get them working together
- Or basically, as Lynn says about this time of life: *“Just help them get through it.”*

Other ideas that will help:

- Plan Activities where you demonstrate normal social behaviors and good manners
 - Involve a few, fun, older folks (they will serve as mentors and examples)
 - Dinners (where they dress up and serve people, or provide entertainment)
 - Dances – (square dances, if nothing else)
 - Teach manners at dance
 - Movie Night
 - Show an old favorite movie on a wall or big screen
 - Remember to “sell” popcorn and soft drinks
 - Outings to various places/ camps/ etc
 - Lots of chaperones (1 adult for every 4-5 teens)
 - Spread the chaperones out among teens (don’t hide in kitchen together)
 - Campfires – can have some fun, and also have some serious talks
- Plan Service Projects
 - Often teens/ youth don’t realize their built-in desire to help others
 - Responsibility and Service to Others help teens transition into their roles as adults
 - Very often churches miss opportunities to help teens understand that they are a vibrant, important part of the church body. Service helps the teens to learn this.
 - Plan Regular Group Events to help others
 - Make cookies or other baked goods
 - Visit the elderly
 - Help a widow with house or yard work
 - Make blankets to give away
 - Pair teens with younger children in other classes at church
 - Have teens read to children, play games, encourage and mentor them
 - This is good for the teens AND encouraging for the younger children
 - Helps build fellowship within the church body

- Involve the teens in planning the service projects
 - Talk about opportunities
 - Say things like: We want to help people. We need some people to help. Who do we know who needs some help? What kind of help do they need?
- Small Groups
 - Use to discuss how we apply Bible truths to our lives
 - One leader (mature Christian) who is older than group by at least 4 years
 - One or more assistants (Christians) who are older than group by at least 2 years
 - Women leaders with girls and Men leaders with boys
 - 5-7 students in a group. (Combine groups if not enough students present)
 - Teach, ask questions, confront gently, help students find answers to questions
 - Small groups must be a “safe place”
 - No teasing
 - Listen politely while others are talking
 - No repeating stories told to the group in confidence
 - Have a really “great” name for your group (and some sort of “gimmick”)
 - The importance of this cannot be overstated – especially with boys
 - EXAMPLE: *Our son, David, had a small group at camp that they called the “Ninjas.” The first day, he taught them how to cover their faces, Ninja style, with a t-shirt. All week at camp whenever he yelled “Ninjas,” they responded “Hi!” And then they would try and become **invisible** by hiding behind something! The kids had a great time, and I’m sure their parents were horrified when they heard about it all later on... (Making the whole experience just that much greater!!)*
 - Have fun!
 - Talk about serious stuff
 - Your goal is to discuss how to apply biblical truths to your own lives

Suggested Schedule for Middle School/ High School Classes

- Welcome
- Prayer
- “Business” and Announcements (if any)
- Lesson (presented to entire group)
- Small Group time
 - Discuss lesson and how it applies to us
 - Talk about other “important things” that the kids need to talk about
 - Challenge the kids to decide for themselves if God is right in what He says
 - Pray together for small group and for friends and other needs
- Come back together with large group for praise, snacks, and dismissal

Working with Adults (18 Years Old and Older)

Working with adults can be very rewarding. Of all the age groups, they are the most likely to be able to study any part of the Bible and learn how to apply God's truths to their lives. **However, many adults** (especially new Christians) **know very little about the Bible**. So it is important to think about what your group already knows, and take them forward from there.

ADULTS who are NEW CHRISTIANS

- Sometimes it is best to involve new Christians with helping in their children's classes
 - Hearing the Bible stories
 - Learning basic Bible truths
 - Learning to work with students and other teachers
 - Learning service to others
 - Showing God's love to others
 - It's good for the adults and for their children!
 - Pastor Darrell Fraley in his book "Children's Ministry: The Trust Building Business" says that "*Children's Ministry is the best basic discipleship method available in the church today.*" Not only for the child, but also for an adult working in children's ministry
 - Pastor Fraley also says, "*A children's Sunday School ministry that uses quality, published curricula, will provide a scope and sequence that will give an overview of the major highlights of the entire Bible. For adults new to the faith, this is vital to spiritual growth and faith development.*"
- Another option is to start a "New Members" class
 - Usually taught by the pastor or another staff member
 - Go over "basic beliefs" of Christianity and "doctrines" of the church
 - Salvation
 - Holy Spirit
 - Baptism
 - Communion
 - Body of Christ (the Church)
 - Gospel (or the Good News about Jesus)
 - Evangelism – Reaching Out to Others and telling them about Jesus
 - Spiritual Disciplines
 - Prayer, Reading the Bible, Giving (tithing)
- Or, start a class with New Christians to help them understand the Gospel message and how to tell others about it
 - Read Bible verses, sing praise songs, encourage one another
 - Talk about how God is working in your lives
 - Pray for each other, for you pastor, and for others in church and community
 - Show love to others

- Practice acts of kindness and service to others
- As you go along, read more about the Bible
- From time to time have your pastor come and talk to your class

ADULTS who are MATURE CHRISTIANS

- Topics to Study
 - There are a myriad of topics available for adult classes to study
 - Some suggestions might include:
 - Reading through the Bible
 - Old Testament History: (Genesis, Exodus, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Samuel)
 - Gospels (stories of Jesus in New Testament) Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
 - Parables of Jesus (found in the Gospels)
 - Psalms and Proverbs (Wisdom literature and praise of God)
 - Church Instruction (Letters of Paul to the various churches in New Testament: Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Thessalonians, etc.)
 - Marriage, Raising Children
 - Salvation Message and How we are Saved (Romans and Hebrews)
 - The Early Church (Acts)
- Teachers for adult classes
 - Discuss curriculum choices with your pastor or church elders
 - Stay at least one lesson ahead of your class! ☺
 - Teach what you have learned
 - Teach what you know, so you can talk about your own experiences
 - Therefore the lessons are “real” to you and your students
 - Always have a Bible verse to back up your major points in your lesson
 - Don't teach your “opinions” unless they are upheld by a Bible verse
 - Remember that your opinions are not more important than what the Bible says
 - Try not to dwell on (or argue about) tiny details
 - Let class discussions be thoughtful
 - Try not to give out any misinformation
 - And try not to let it be given out in class by others
 - Never read the Bible? Start with the Old Testament stories (like the children do)
 - In that way you will learn about the character of God
 - You will also learn important lessons by studying the men and women of the Old Testament and how they related to God
 - Remember that God does not change, so He is the same now as then!

Suggestions for Schedule during Class Time (Adult Classes)

- Welcome Time – talk, have refreshments (maybe coffee and pastries)
- Open with Prayer
 - Remember the sick, the elderly, and others in need
 - Thank God for being with you and ask Him to send His Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth about the lesson
- Business (if any)
- Lesson
 - Bible Reading
 - Teacher gives his/her thoughts
 - Short Discussion: What does this mean to us in our lives?
 - Look at the Bible verse again and ask yourselves:
 - Is there a lesson to learn?
 - Is there a command to obey?
 - Is there an example to follow?
 - Consider how you might put these things into action in your lives
 - Conclude Lesson
- Other Business/ Needs of Community: How can we help others/ show love to others?
- Close in Prayer
- Dismissal Time – talk, enjoy fellowship together, etc

Other Things that you might want to Schedule during Class Time

- Offering
- Announcements
- Organizational Business
- Sign-up for Things (church activities, volunteer opportunities, and such)
- Discussions on How to Help Others (as a class or as individuals)
- Celebrations (birthdays, anniversaries, holidays)

Teachers' Training 101

Are you called? Not on the phone. Are you led? Not by the nose.

Thank you for participating in this Teachers' Training Program.

It is our prayer that it has helped you in some small way.

If you find that you benefit from it, we ask that you give God
all the glory and honor for it.

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