

# 12 Practical Ideas for Revitalizing the Sunday School

**A**lthough Sunday School ministry has been declining in recent decades, I'm not ready to give up on it. I still think the Sunday School is the church's best ministry for systematically communicating Biblical content and doctrine to people at every age level. (And remember, the understanding and application of Scripture is what changes lives and fosters spiritual growth.) Sunday School is valuable for building relationships and focusing on caring ministry. Sunday School can still have an effective outreach. Let's not remove Sunday School; let's revitalize it! Consider these practical suggestions toward that goal.

## Promote the Sunday School on the church's website.

Using your church's website can be one of the most effective ways to promote Sunday School. Give Sunday School prominence on your site and keep it updated about study topics and class activities. Consider a separate Sunday School Facebook page as well.

## Choose good curriculum.

Effective Sunday Schools are intentional about curriculum. They choose materials that are easy to use and are true to the Scriptures. RBP Sunday School curriculum meets these needs; its scope and sequence takes children through the whole Bible and takes adults through Bible book and doctrinal studies.

## Get back to teacher training.

Long gone are the days of weekly teachers' meetings. But we can reinstitute a plan to sharpen our teachers' skills through annual training events and regular department meetings that include practical teaching tips and instruction.

## Use class prospect lists.

Growing Sunday School classes keep a list of prospects from other church ministries or members who don't attend Sunday School. They take the initiative to pray, contact, and invite these prospects to join them in class.

## Recruit and train Sunday School greeters.

A warm greeting goes a long way when a person first attends a Sunday School class. Enlist volunteers to come early to welcome others as they arrive, showing special interest in any newcomers.

## Spruce up the classrooms.

A sloppy and disorganized classroom sends the wrong

message to newcomers and can be a distraction. Unfortunately, regular attenders often don't seem to notice. Consider doing some painting. Replace old tables and chairs. Update the lighting. And yes, take the time to declutter those classrooms!

## Promptly connect newcomers to Sunday School classes.

The strategy of seeking to direct returning worship-service guests to appropriate Sunday School classes is huge in helping to assimilate newcomers, and it builds the Sunday School as well. Consider enlisting class leaders to contact guests during the week, inviting them to specific Sunday School classes.

## Don't neglect fellowship and caring in adult classes.

People are looking for fellowship as well as solid teaching in adult Sunday School classes these days. Effective classes incorporate time for the sharing of needs and prayer without neglecting the primary importance of Biblical instruction. This structure also provides the foundation for caring ministry outside of class time, and it often builds class commitment.

## Strengthen strategies to follow up on absentees.

Growing Sunday Schools have implemented a plan at every age level to follow up on attenders who stop coming. It usually involves initial contact by mail or phone, followed by personal contact from a fellow class member or the teacher. Of course, this follow-up requires keeping accurate attendance records and training class volunteers to make these follow-up contacts.

## Reinstitute a church-wide Sunday School social.

Many churches still have an annual summer picnic; why not focus on Sunday School. Include games and awards for the children's classes and fun competition among the adult classes. Or consider Sunday School sponsored trips to a professional sporting event. These are great ways to build relationships and promote Sunday School.

## Update methods and equipment.

Utilizing updated methods and tools can make us more effective in today's teaching environment. No offense, but the days of overhead projectors are over. Consider PowerPoint projection and electronic outlines for learners who will use their handheld devices to follow along in Scripture.

Promote Sunday School attendance with a contest or giveaway. At one VBS this summer I noticed the value of a well-organized and promoted contest among children. The excitement can be adapted for the Sunday School environment and can result in opportunities to minister to children and adults.