



The
Alabama Baptist
Sunday School
Standard of ***Excellence***

Daniel Edmonds and Rick Ellison

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*That ye might walk
worthy of the Lord
unto all pleasing,
being fruitful in every
good work, and
increasing in the
knowledge of God*

Colossians 1:10

WELCOME TO EXCELLENCE

There is power in faith goals. These goals keep us from being complacent and accepting the status quo. There is a godly discontent that we can do more for the kingdom of God.

Take a mental journey. Stand apart from your Sunday School and observe it for a moment. Does God desire to do more than is being accomplished now? Do you see ways to improve? Can you picture what could be accomplished if faith goals were set that would take your Sunday School and church to the next level of growth and make an impact on people's lives?

There are churches today that wonder if they will survive in the future due to a decline of members. Would the future of many of our churches look brighter if goals to strengthen the Sunday School had taken place years ago? No matter what the situation of our church today, whether it is growing, plateaued or declining, when we step out in faith to do God's work, trusting him for the results, He will bless.

The Standard of Excellence has been designed to strategically help you to set goals to move to the next level. As a result more people will be reached for Christ, disciplined, receive and give ministry.

The Bible teaches that we are in a spiritual war against Satan. In every war there must be strategy. The Standard of Excellence helps you to develop that strategy.

It is the desire of the Sunday School Office to work in partnership with you and be a resource to you in reaching your goals and make an impact in the building of God's kingdom in your community.

Daniel Edmonds, Director
Office of Sunday School

Rick Ellison, Education Ministry Leadership
Office of Sunday School

Alabama Baptist Sunday School Standard of Excellence

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MAC Model: Momentum – Alignment – Celebration				
	Current	Momentum Goals	Alignment Goals	Celebration Goals
Participants Increasing				
People Enrolled				
People Discovered				
Personal Touches				
People Reachers				
Purposeful Classes				
Potential Space				
Prayer Partners				
Prepared Leaders				
Planning Meetings (Monthly)				
Preparation Events (Yearly)				

Church: _____ ***Mail your goals to:**
 Rick Ellison
 The Office of Sunday School

Pastor: _____ Alabama Baptist Convention
 State Board of Missions

Address: _____ P.O. Box 11870

Phone _____ Montgomery, AL 36111-0870

Date of Current Stats: _____

EXCELLENCE

People Matter To God - God Deserves Our Best

PROCESS

- Using the planning guide identify where you are.
- Using the planning guide, set your goals.
- Submit goals to partner with the Sunday School Office.
(Our office will serve as a resource to help you reach your goals. Other helps will be sent to you by e-mail.)
- Take as long as needed to reach your goals.

HOW TO USE THE STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

The Standard of Excellence is based on an MAC Model.

Momentum

As our people are involved in the harvest field we are in the best position to be used by God. As we discover and involve people in Sunday School something positive begins to happen in the church. As ministry contacts are made on a consistent basis, something positive begins to happen in the church. There is a momentum that moves the church toward growth, health and a positive attitude of excitement about what God is doing. More people come to know Christ and are disciplined.

Alignment

Growing Sunday Schools must be in touch with God daily to accomplish His purposes. Jesus told us that without Him “we can do nothing.” Organizing our classes with prayer partners is pleasing to God. Along with faith and prayer there must also be strategy. Providing space and expanding the Sunday School organization produces real growth. Starting new classes provides new mission points to be used by God and impacts lives.

Celebration

The work and morale of the Sunday School leadership team is vital. The more leaders the greater the involvement on Sunday mornings and in ministry during the week. The more leaders involved the greater the impact for the kingdom of God. Leadership team building and planning are critically important. Training for quality ministry is absolutely important. How can the team function in a healthy way if they never come together for encouragement and direction? When leaders are focused on goals momentum and alignment do occur. However, something even greater happens – celebration. The team celebrates victories of what has been accomplished in work with the Lord Jesus Christ. Celebration encourages us to set new goals for the next level of growth and impact people’s lives. Celebration gives us opportunity to recognize and show appreciation to our leaders.

THE PROCESS

Write down your current statistics that correspond to the goals you are working toward.

- **Participants Increasing** – Sunday School average attendance for the past three months.
- **People Enrolled** – Current Sunday School enrollment.
- **People Discovered** – Current number of people in the prospect file being contacted.
- **Personal Touches** – Indicates that classes are adequately making contacts and that the attendance is at least 40-50% of the enrollment during the last month.
- **People Reachers** – The number of people who make contacts each week. Total for the month.
- **Purposeful Classes** – Number of Sunday School classes on and off campus.
- **Potential Space** – Number of spaces on and off campus for classes to meet.
- **Prayer Partners** – Number of people committed to pray for the work of the class and Sunday School.
- **Prepared Leaders** – Total number of people who serve in any capacity in your Sunday School.
- **Planning Meetings** – There is a definite planning meeting at least once a month. Individual classes are encouraged to plan weekly. Indicates planning meetings are provided.
- **Preparation Events** – The church will provide at least one training event during the year. You may also use an associational or state training event. See the section on Preparation Events for various ways to do this. Indicates preparation events are provided.

HOW TO PLAN YOUR GOALS

If you are just beginning to use goals and choose the Momentum column, set moderate goals. Increases in these areas will help you grow moderately for a period of time. However, it is a beginning!

Adding new classes, leaders, outreachers and space will help your Sunday School to experience greater growth. Training the leadership will build in quality.

- **Participants Increasing** – Set a goal of average attendance to be sustained for four consecutive weeks which is higher than your current attendance. This will help you reach a new level.
- **People Enrolled** – Set your enrollment goal at twice your attendance goal.
- **People Discovered** – These are more than just names that have been kept in a prospect file. These are people that are actively being contacted. Use the following to determine the goal for prospects. You will need at least twice as many prospects as your attendance goal increase. For example: if your average attendance goal increase is 20, you will need 40 current prospects, twice as many as your attendance goal increase.
- **Personal Touches** – Every person on roll should have a contact during the month. Regular attendees should be contacted the week after being absent to communicate that they were missed and to make sure that they are okay. Contacts should be made to reach new people. Weekly touches such as visits, phone calls, newsletters, cards, e-mails can also be used. Contacts for upcoming fellowships provide a way to contact everyone. Fellowships provide a way to build community. Adult classes should have a fellowship at least once a quarter. A weekly e-mail letting the class know about the study for the coming Sunday and upcoming special events can provide a contact every week. This information can be mailed to those who don't have e-mail. A form is included in this material so that classes can indicate that they have made their contacts. This can also be used to set a contacts goal for each month. A indicates that classes have made contacts during the month. Please check to determine that adequate contacts are being made by classes. If your attendance falls below 40-50% of the enrollment then adequate contacts are not being made.
- **People Reachers** – Every class should have at least one person making contacts each week. The goal for People Reachers should be the same as the goal for Purposeful Classes.
- **Purposeful Classes** – Start a new class for every ten people you are seeking to increase in attendance.
- **Potential Space** – There should be at least two more spaces available than Purposeful Class goals.
- **Prayer Partners** – The goal should be the same as the Purposeful Class goal.
- **Prepared Leaders** – A leader is anyone who does anything in service for the Sunday School. This includes teachers, helpers, people reachers, care leaders, class leaders, greeters, hospitality leaders and anyone otherwise involved in administration. The more people committed to service the higher the attendance. There's a minimum of two prepared leaders for each new Purposeful Class. Record your goal for total leaders.
- **Planning Meetings** – There is a definite planning meeting at least once a month. Individual classes are encouraged to plan weekly. Indicates planning meetings are provided.
- **Preparation Events** – The church will provide at least one training event during the year. You may also use an associational or state training event. See the section on Preparation Events for various ways to do this. Indicates preparation events are provided

GROWING YOUR SUNDAY SCHOOL

- **PARTICIPANTS INCREASING**
- **PEOPLE ENROLLED**
- **PEOPLE DISCOVERED**
- **PERSONAL TOUCHES**
- **PEOPLE REACHERS**

PEOPLE MATTER TO GOD

**PARTICIPATING IN SUNDAY SCHOOL
MAKES A DIFFERENCE IN PEOPLE'S LIVES**

SOME BENEFITS

- PEOPLE ARE REACHED FOR CHRIST.
- CARING AND FELLOWSHIP. NEW FRIENDS BECOME A PART OF OUR LIVES.
- MINISTRY IS GIVEN AND RECEIVED.
- LIFE CHANGING BIBLE STUDY FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.
- SPIRITUAL GIFTS AND ABILITIES ARE USED IN SERVICE.
- FAMILIES ARE STRENGTHENED.

**PARTICIPATING IN
SUNDAY SCHOOL MATTERS
BECAUSE PEOPLE MATTER TO GOD**

PEOPLE ENROLLED

Historically in baseball it has been “three strikes and you’re out”. Historically in Sunday School sometimes it has been “three hits and you’re in”. A person could enroll in Sunday School if they attended three Sunday’s (sometimes in a row), asked to be enrolled and got their enrollment card into the Sunday School office before the record book left the class. Some classes have had an unwritten rule that you must actively attend and be accepted by the class before enrollment could take place.

Why are barriers like this placed between unchurched people, Sunday School and sometimes God? In the New Testament well meaning disciples and others sometimes became a barrier between people with needs and Jesus.

Matthew 14:15-18

¹⁵ *And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.*

¹⁶ *But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.*

¹⁷ *And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.*

¹⁸ *He said, Bring them hither to me.*

Matthew 15:21-24

²¹ *Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.*

²² *And, behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.*

²³ *But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away, for she crieth after us.*

²⁴ *But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

Matthew 20:29-34

²⁹ *And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.*

³⁰ *And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David.*

³¹ *And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David.*

³² *And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?*

³³ *They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.*

³⁴ *So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.*

Mark 2:1-5

¹ And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

² And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

³ And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four,

⁴ And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

Mark 10:13-16

¹³ And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them.

¹⁴ But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God.

¹⁵ Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

¹⁶ And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.

Mark 10:46-48

⁴⁶ And they came to Jericho, and as he went out of Jericho, with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging.

⁴⁷ And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me.

⁴⁸ And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me.

Luke 7:36-39

³⁶ And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

³⁷ And, behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment,

³⁸ And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

³⁹ Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him: for she is a sinner.

Enrolling anyone, if they agree opens the door for ministry to people. It breaks down barriers between the church and the unchurched. Our Sunday School rolls should be seen as ministry lists. Each time someone agrees to enroll we add them to our ministry list. We are accountable to minister to them whether they attend or not. It was love that drew people to Jesus. When we demonstrate that kind of godly love to those who are on our ministry list they will be drawn to the church.

Take care in dropping people from the roll. A person is dropped from the roll when there is death, one moves from the community or joins another church. Some churches also drop people from the roll when there is a written request. Requests made from an individual to the church office requesting to be dropped should be followed up by church staff.

Make sure that the Sunday School records are protected. This can be done by keeping your master of class rolls on computer or by having a backup file.

Remember that when we remove a name we are really removing a person from our care and ministry. All drops should be approved by the appropriate person designated by your church.

OPEN ENROLLMENT: WHO, WHEN, WHERE, AND WHY?

The challenge to grow your Sunday School is a challenge to change the mindset or attitude of your church members.

ATTITUDE CHANGE #1

Often we only consider enrolling people who have come to our church because they have shown interest in us. We need to develop an attitude of concern for the spiritual well-being of others. Everyone needs to study the Word of God and experience the support of a loving, Christian fellowship. With this attitude of concern, we should seek to enroll anyone we meet who is not involved in the study of the Bible. This means we can enroll friends, family members, fellow workers, people in the community, people we have just met – absolutely anyone.

ATTITUDE CHANGE #2

When do we enroll people in Sunday School? Usually within the first fifteen minutes of class time. We need to develop an attitude that says, “now is the time.” If you are in Worship, at the office, walking in the community, watching a baseball game; “now is the time” to enroll someone in Sunday School. Anytime you are in the presence of anyone who is not involved in the study of the Bible is the best time to enroll them in Sunday School.

ATTITUDE CHANGE #3

The classroom is the place most people are enrolled in Sunday School. Once again, we put the burden on others to do something in order to qualify for enrollment. We need to develop an attitude that says, “the best place to enroll someone is wherever you find them.” Where should people be enrolled in Bible study?

at home

at work

at the restaurant

at the local high school football game

at the hospital

at your door

at the grocery store

Anywhere you find people is the best place to enroll someone. If you are at a place where no one else is around, then go where the people are and enroll someone.

ATTITUDE CHANGE #4

In order for most people to be enrolled, they have to show a level of commitment to the Sunday School class. If we wait for people to commit to us, then we are not likely to reach an unsaved person. We need to develop the Great Commission attitude and go to the people. We need to ask for the privilege of committing to care for them. If they agree, then we need to follow through on our commitment. Many people that agree to enroll are wanting to see if you really care. As you live out your commitment to them by demonstrating the love of Christ, expect

good things to happen. When they know you care, then they will come to Sunday School and, someday, to Christ.

Enrollment could be understood as a covenant relationship between the class and the individuals who are enrolled. Certainly you want class members to make a contribution to the health of the class, but the key is for the class to uphold a covenant of ministry to the members. You should seek to develop a covenant of promise between the class and members. The covenant should incorporate a promise of prayer, an offer to share, and a commitment to care in times of need. Here is an example of a covenant of enrollment and how you might say it to a prospect:

“I would like the privilege of adding your name to my Sunday School class (Bible Study group). We are a group of people who care about others. When I add your name to the group, it will not obligate you to us, but will enable us to pray for you by name, share with you, and care for you and your family if you encounter a need. You do not have to attend the group, but someday you may decide to explore that opportunity. If you do come, we promise to not embarrass you, but to help you discover friends who really care about you. May I have the privilege of adding your name to my class (group)?”

If the person says “yes,” you will need to get the appropriate information for follow-up (name, address, phone number, age, and church background). You should then assign the new enrollee to a care group or individual who will uphold the covenant of promise. Each week (or every two weeks) they should call and discover prayer requests, so they can pray effectively for the prospect. Each month, they should seek to share with the new member something they might enjoy (baked goods or a small gift) or an item they can benefit from by reading (the Sunday School literature or devotional material). If a need is discovered, take appropriate actions so the new member discovers that you care about them.

If the person says “no” to enrolling in your class, ask if they would like to receive more information about your church (if they do not have a church home) and materials that could assist them in daily life. If they express an interest, then get the required information for a qualified prospect (name, address, phone number, age, and church background) and add them to the prospect file of an age-appropriate class. A prospect should receive some type of communication every other week. Much of this communication may take place through the mail, but an occasional call or doorstep visit will be beneficial. If you fail to quickly and regularly contact prospects, then you will lose the potential of reaching them. Begin immediately to have someone pray daily for each prospect. Ask God to create an opportunity to impact their lives for the cause of the Kingdom.

If you want class members to enroll people in Sunday School, then you need to provide tools and training. Tools should include enrollment cards (sample page included), church brochure, and Sunday School or devotional literature. In training individuals you will need to stress the importance of adequate and accurate information. If you do not have accurate information, then class members will be frustrated in their efforts to contact the new member or prospect. If you do not have adequate information (name, address, phone number, age, and church background), then you have not successfully enrolled an individual and/or have not truly discovered a prospect. One difficulty in enrolling people is how to bring up the subject of enrollment. It is best not to ask the person if they are a member of a church, but to ask if they are involved in a life-changing Bible study group. If they are not involved in Bible study anywhere, then seek to enroll them.

NEW CHURCH MEMBERS AND ENROLLMENT

Sunday School involvement is critical for new church members. Some may have become new church members after becoming involved in the Sunday School. Some may have only been attending the worship services. Some may have visited a Sunday School class but have not yet enrolled.

It is important to communicate that ministry to them and to others takes place through the Sunday School. It is here that friendships are developed. It is here that we stay better connected to the church.

Some churches automatically enroll new church members in a class if not already enrolled. When a new member is assigned to a class the teacher is informed for follow up.

New member's classes can also share information about the importance of being involved in Sunday School. New church members involved in a Sunday School class will remain active in a church much longer than those not involved.

PEOPLE DISCOVERED
BRAINSTORM WAYS TO

DISCOVER PEOPLE. . .

(Such as worship services; Sunday School; family events such as Fall Festivals; inviting family and friends to baptism; and parent-child dedications; youth events; music events; sports events; men and women's ministry events; special seminars; Easter and other community type services; community needs survey.)

**CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE
OF CARING
THROUGH YOUR SUNDAY MORNING WELCOME**

Being prepared to greet on Sunday morning not only helps us to discover information about newcomers, but also helps them to connect with us. It does not take people long to determine their impressions about our church and whether they will return.

Don't assume that everyone knows where to go on Sunday morning. **MOST NEWCOMERS DON'T KNOW WHERE TO GO.**

SOME IDEAS

- Provide guest parking at the most convenient place to enter the buildings where newcomers will be greeted and provided with directions. Reserve parking for guests with clear directional signs. Consider having a friendly greeter at the parking area to welcome them.
- Provide a welcome center at a location strategic to worship and Sunday School. Provide an attractive sign that blends well with your buildings. At the welcome center ask guests to fill out an information card. You can have these printed with carbon copies. All family information should be completed on one card. Basic information should include name, address, and phone. Adults may circle age categories such as 25-30, 35-40, 45-50, etc. Ages and grades of the children should be included. Age designations will help find the proper classes. Keep a master copy at the welcome center for follow-up.

Your friendliest greeters should work at the welcome center. Information about the church and a list of all Sunday School classes, locations and age groupings should be provided.

Greeters should be available at the welcome center to take guests to their class. They will escort the family to children's classes first and introduce the children to their teachers. More information is usually needed in the preschool areas. Give teachers a copy of the guest information. Write down the room numbers of where the children are in class for the parents.

Escort adults to their class. Introduce them to the teachers and others. Ask someone in the class to be their host and escort them back to the children's classes after Sunday School and then to the worship service. Make guests feel welcomed and at home.

- Provide greeters at all main entrances. Greet members, attendees and guests. Place your friendliest people at main entrances to greet everyone who enters. This will set a positive tone for the entire day.
- Train greeters and leaders to be friendly and helpful to guests.

*CONTACT RICK ELLSION IN THE OFFICE OF SUNDAY SCHOOL TO ASSIST IN
CREATING A WELCOME/GREETER MINISTRY IN YOUR CHURCH.*

1-800-264-1225 EXT. 200

PERSONAL TOUCHES

Every person enrolled in Sunday School should receive a personal touch from another classmate every week. These personal touches can include calls, cards, and personal visits to share or demonstrate that you care. The goal is to keep people encouraged by praying for them faithfully and ministering to them effectively. It is not uncommon that a faithful member encounters a personal crisis or illness and no one seems to notice. If their absence extends beyond two weeks and they are not contacted, then they may decide that no one really cares. When this happens, they lose their sense of belonging and slowly (though sometimes rapidly) disconnect from the group.

Often a comment is made that you can contact someone too much. However, it would be better to call too much, than to care too little to discover someone's need. A common sense approach to a weekly contact would be a quick phone call (or e-mail) to update the class prayer list. A postcard sent to the home when you know the member is away on vacation is a wonderful reminder that someone was praying for them while they were away. The occasional visit to share baked goods and a friendly smile is always a welcomed way to remind someone you care. Be creative and give your contacts a "personal touch."

Can you over-do a good thing? Sure, but usually only when the emphasis is on getting rather than giving. Don't view a contact as a way of getting something (attendance), but of giving something (encouragement and support). In doing this you will rarely speak to someone of their attendance, but you will demonstrate to them how much you care about them (whether they attend or not). If the focus is on attendance, eventually the member will say to you "Leave me alone, if I want to attend I know how to find the church!" This is a clear indication the member believes you are trying to make them feel guilty rather than loved.

Stay faithful in your commitment to pray, share and care no matter whether they attend or not. A Sunday School teacher once got discouraged because she had been diligent in contacting a class member with no results. Like many, she was tempted to drop the young lady from the class enrollment. Thankfully, she resisted the temptation and after four years of persistence in making a variety of personal touches, the young lady came to Sunday School. Within months she made a profession of faith and soon began to respond to God's call on her life to do missions work.

Another class remained faithful in reaching out to a new enrollee. For eighteen months she never came to church. One day, as the class again made a personal touch, they discovered her in a crisis. Through the rapid response and loving ministry of her classmates, the lady came to know Christ. On the Sunday she made public her faith, she wrote at the bottom of her membership card, "I thank God my Sunday School class never gave up on me." Have you ever given up on someone?

Personal touches can minister to the hurting and open the door of opportunity for the Gospel to be shared. The Edmonds' family has mowed lawns, made brownies, ministered in times of crisis, and thrown parties in order to have the opportunity to share and show the love of Christ. Through the variety of personal touches we have watched as God has blessed and people have experienced the joy of salvation. It is simple, fun, and incredibly rewarding to see what God can do through a touch, a smile, and an act of kindness. Can you think of a creative way to show someone the love of Christ?

**SERVING GOD
WITH
EXCELLENCE**

**PERSONAL TOUCHES FOR CHRIST
PEOPLE MATTER TO GOD – GOD DESERVES OUR BEST**

CLASS MONTHLY REPORT

TEACHER _____ **CLASS** _____
MONTH _____

Estimated Number of People Making Contacts During the Month _____

Please Check if Your Class has Made Contacts for the Month.

PERSONAL TOUCHES – Every person on roll should have a contact during the month. Regular attendees should be contacted the week after being absent to communicate that they were missed and to make sure that they are o.k. Contacts should be made to reach new people. Weekly touches such as visits, phone calls, newsletters, cards, e-mails can also be used. Contacts for upcoming fellowships provide a way to contact everyone. Fellowships provide a way to build community. Adult classes should have a fellowship at least once a quarter. A weekly e-mail letting the class know about the study for the coming Sunday and upcoming special events can provide a contact every week. This information can be mailed to those who don't have e-mail.

CLASSES SETTING A MONTHLY CONTACTS GOAL!

CURRENT MONTH'S GOAL _____ **ESTIMATED CONTACTS** _____

PEOPLE REACHERS

DEVELOPING AN OUTREACH AND EVANGELISM STRATEGY

Through the years most churches have participated in some type of church-wide visitation. Often there is a campaign or emphasis to inspire people to participate over a designated number of weeks (typically a four to ten week period). Most of these campaigns start out with a bang and finish with a whimper. The first week a large number of participants come for the visitation, but attendance erodes over the remaining weeks until only a small, faithful core group (sometimes the pastor and one other) remain. I call this the “start large and grow it into the ground” strategy. It is a typical pattern because of the belief that something successful draws a large crowd. Personally, something successful may have small beginnings, but multiplies and grows into a much larger ministry.

What causes people to drop out of outreach efforts? Misinformation is a contributor. If those involved in outreach lack proper information or are recipients of misinformation they become disillusioned. It is very discouraging to be given a wrong address and to waste valuable time hunting the correct information. Also, it is embarrassing to be sent to a house to visit a prospect, only to discover the person is a deacon, pastor, or faithful member of another local church. Great care needs to be given to obtaining accurate and verified information. Send people to visit good prospects and it will generate excitement. Learn to build an up-to-date prospect file and assignment system.

Another factor in declining numbers of people visiting is fear. Bad experiences cannot always be avoided in visitation. However, it is wise to send people out with an experienced leader who can defuse difficult situations and give encouragement to their partner. Training in a classroom setting can allay some fears, but on-the-job training (OJT) with an experienced leader will create new leaders. Several quality evangelism tools are available to churches (FAITH, Net, Share Jesus Without Fear, etc...), but the best training includes OJT because it reduces fear and failure.

Probably the biggest factor in the declining numbers of people attending visitation is the lack of accountability for participation and assimilation. There is a saying that everyone’s job becomes nobody’s job. The best outreach strategy is developed through the Sunday School where specific assignments can be made to individuals and classes. There is a significant difference in church-wide visitation and Sunday School outreach visitation.

In church-wide visitation, participants gather and randomly pair-off to go visiting. Next prospect cards are passed out or picked up off of a table in a somewhat haphazard way. When the visitors complete their mission they return, drop off the visitation cards with little recorded information, and depart for home. Usually there is no joint celebration report among the participants and no planning of effective follow-up or follow-through. In fact, often the visit is made to an individual who is a prospect for the church, but not for the Sunday School class of the person making the visit. When this happens there is little motivation for follow-up and a general lack of interest in what results from the visit. The person receiving the visit perceives that they have little in common with the individual(s) making the visit so no significant connection is made during the visit. Finally, those involved in church-wide visitation sense no accountability for continual involvement. They may feel that they have served their term and next week will be someone else’s turn.

Sunday School outreach involves individual classes in visiting prospects and members for their particular class. It is most effective when there is an identified and trained outreach leader in each class. This leader is tasked with involving class members in visitation, holding the class accountable, and raising up new leaders. Not only is there more accountability for participation because of the embedded leader, but since they visit prospects for their class there is increased motivation for follow-up. The leader has the opportunity to build in support people for the entire reaching strategy. The leader will make certain that care groups are in place that will follow up each week with new enrollees. Excitement is generated in the class as members hear the reports and see the results (new people attending).

Sunday School outreach also gives attention to ministering to the needs of existing members. Each week as the Sunday School outreach team visits they have the opportunity to visit in the homes of members who are in need of a personal touch. This helps to build unity and prevent the loss of members.

The only way to be effective in Sunday School outreach is to plan each week as a Sunday School class. The class needs to develop and implement a process of reaching and ministering. In this way, responsibilities are clearly defined and the class team knows who needs a visit and the other class members get involved in follow-up. Several churches have built an effective class organization to focus on both ministry and outreach. Strength and effectiveness comes from working together as a team. Build accountability for outreach participation and assimilation by developing a Sunday School class team.

To get started, a good strategy would be to start small by working with a couple of people who are willing to be trained in outreach/evangelism. The training time should include visitation experiences, as well as classroom training. It is important that the learners have the opportunity to go with an experienced leader so they can learn to do it right. As these people are trained, then they can be encouraged to train others. As leaders develop other leaders in the Sunday School outreach ministry, you will be able to grow it strong.¹ This is the example of Jesus, rather than starting with the masses He worked with the disciples.

As leaders are trained and multiplied, place them in classes (preferably a new class) as the outreach leader. Assign them prospects for their class and hold them accountable for developing an outreach team in the class that will visit and follow-up with prospects and members who need ministry. New classes with an effective outreach strategy will grow faster and strengthen the overall health of Sunday School.

¹ Lawrence Phipps and Daniel Edmonds, *Growing Sunday School TEAMS: A 5 Step Practical Guide to Growing the Church Through the Sunday School* (Montgomery: Vaughn Forest Baptist Church, For LIFE Ministries, 2001), 4.

**PREPARING FOR QUALITY MINISTRY
AND
SUNDAY SCHOOL ORGANIZATION**

- **PURPOSEFUL CLASSES**
- **POTENTIAL SPACE**
- **PRAYER PARTNERS**
- **PREPARED LEADERS**
- **PLANNING MEETINGS**
- **PREPARATION EVENTS**

PURPOSEFUL CLASSES

New classes give new life to the church. They become another point of witness and ministry for Christ. They help in the assimilation of people. There may be people who attend worship services but have not been able to connect with people in an existing class. New classes give more opportunities to be a part of Sunday School.

After classes have been in existence for some months people form close relationships. While people in the class may be friendly to newcomers they may find that it is difficult to break into the groups. New classes can involve church attenders and others who have not been able to build relationships in existing classes.

New classes tend to grow more quickly than existing classes. There is excitement and motivation to reach out to others to be part of the class. The new class can involve people who have not attended their current class in some time.

New classes can provide teaching and ministry to help people group together with similar age and life issues. These classes also provide more opportunity for people to serve in leadership ministry opportunities.

Each time a new class begins God uses it to accomplish His purposes. What ministry opportunities have been missed because new classes have not begun? What lives have not been touched because new classes have not begun? What blessings have been missed because new classes have not begun? We may never know how God will use that new class to touch people's lives in the future. God is active and at work and will use these classes as an instrument of His work.

Sometimes there is resistance to starting new classes. People fear that relationships with others may change as people move into new classes. People just fear change. Be prepared to communicate effectively in advance before starting new classes.

Top Excuses For Not Starting New Classes

- ▶ Why does the church leadership want to do this to us?
- ▶ What will happen if we break up our close fellowship?

The Way We Approach Starting New Classes Helps to Lessen Fears and Foster Cooperation.

- Educate the leaders and others about the importance of starting new classes in meetings and at training opportunities. The pastor may choose to reinforce this at times to the church.
- Determine where new classes are needed. There may be large classes in certain age groups. There may be a large age group in the community not represented by a current class. There may be classes with wide age ranges. People may need to be grouped with like ages and needs.
- Identify, enlist and train new teachers. Ask current teachers to mentor someone who will teach in the future. Sometimes the new teacher will draw new people to help start the class who are friends, perhaps in the same class.

- Develop a leadership team to start the new class. A men's or women's class can begin with a teacher and three others who will help with outreach and ministry. A co-ed class can begin with three or four couples. This class has a teacher, outreach leader and care ministry leader.
- Advertise the starting of the new class a couple of weeks in advance in the church newsletter and worship bulletin. Send an invitation to those that other classes have not been able to reach or long term absentees in that age group. Let the new class know that some day they will start a new class.
- Sometimes a larger adult class will take the responsibility of organizing a new class and they determine who will be in each class under the direction of church leadership.
- A motivated teacher may take a list of names of those not attending Sunday School, make contacts and start a new class under the direction of church leadership.

POTENTIAL SPACE

Many churches have stopped growing because there is no more space to start new classes. Sunday School leaders should always be looking ahead to provide future space for growth. In this Standard of Excellence there should always be at least two spaces for expansion.

Consider the following:

- Sunday School classrooms are sometimes used for storage. This space is far more valuable to be used for people than storage. When these rooms are needed it is important to make other arrangements for storage
- Space other than classrooms can also be used such as the worship center, fellowship hall, kitchen, church offices and others.
- It is important to educate classes that you may need to move them to another area or room in order to maximize the use of space. When classes are allowed to put curtains on the wall, rugs on the floor, and pictures on the walls, the class may feel like this is “their classroom.” Actually every space is God’s classroom and must be used to the maximum for His purpose.
- Off-site space may also be used. There may be homes, schools or businesses near the church that could be used on Sunday morning. Some adult classes at the age where children are grown may also meet other than on Sunday morning.
- Multiple Sunday Schools are also a possibility. This process requires a great deal of planning that could take some time. It is important to plan well in advance. The Office of Sunday School can offer assistance in planning and implementation.
- The Office of Sunday School can also offer organizational consultations on planning for future new space or renovation of old space.

PRAYER PARTNERS

John 15:5 (King James Version)

I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

--JESUS CHRIST--

JOHN 15:5

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CAN ABSOLUTLY ACCOMPLISH NOTHING APART FROM THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. THERE IS A SUNDAY SCHOOL PRAYER EMPHASIS IN THE SECTION ON "PREPARED LEADERS" WHICH CAN BE PLANNED AT A LEADERSHIP MEETING.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF PRAYER PARTNERS?

Every class should have at least one prayer partner. These should be people who have a passion for prayer. A class may have one or several prayer partners.

- Prayer Partners Faithfully Pray for the Work of the Class.
- Prayer Partners Pray for the Needs of those Related to the Class.

ENLIST A PRAYER PARTNER COORDINATOR

- The coordinator plans to bring Prayer Partners together at special times to pray for the work of the Sunday School.

SOME IMPORTANT THINGS TO PRAY ABOUT

- Pray for the pastor and other church leaders.
- Pray for the unchurched and the contacts that will be made.
- Pray that God will lead us in discovery of the unchurched.
- Pray for the needs of those related to the Sunday School.
- Pray for the start of new classes.
- Pray for Sunday School teachers and other leaders.
- Pray that God will use leadership meetings to accomplish His purposes.
- Pray for the work of the Holy Spirit to make a difference in people's lives through the Sunday School.
- Praise and Worship God for who He is and what He is doing.
- Pray for God's will to be done.
- Pray for the families related to the Sunday School.
- Thank God for blessings and victories in the Sunday School.
- Pray for God's people to be encouraged as they serve in Sunday School.

SERVING GOD WITH EXCELLENCE

PRAYER PARTNERS

**I COMMIT TO BEING A PRAYER PARTNER FOR MY CLASS. IN FAITH I WILL
PRAY EACH WEEK FOR...**

- **THE WORK AND MINISTRY OF MY CLASS**
- **PRAYER NEEDS FOR THOSE RELATED TO MY CLASS**

**I WILL ALSO JOIN TOGETHER WITH PRAYER PARTNERS
FROM OTHER CLASSES AT TIMES.**

NAME _____

CLASS _____

TELEPHONE _____

SERVING GOD WITH EXCELLENCE

PRAYER PARTNERS

**I COMMIT TO BEING A PRAYER PARTNER FOR MY CLASS. IN FAITH I WILL
PRAY EACH WEEK FOR...**

- **THE WORK AND MINISTRY OF MY CLASS**
- **PRAYER NEEDS FOR THOSE RELATED TO MY CLASS**

**I WILL ALSO JOIN TOGETHER WITH PRAYER PARTNERS
FROM OTHER CLASSES AT TIMES.**

NAME _____

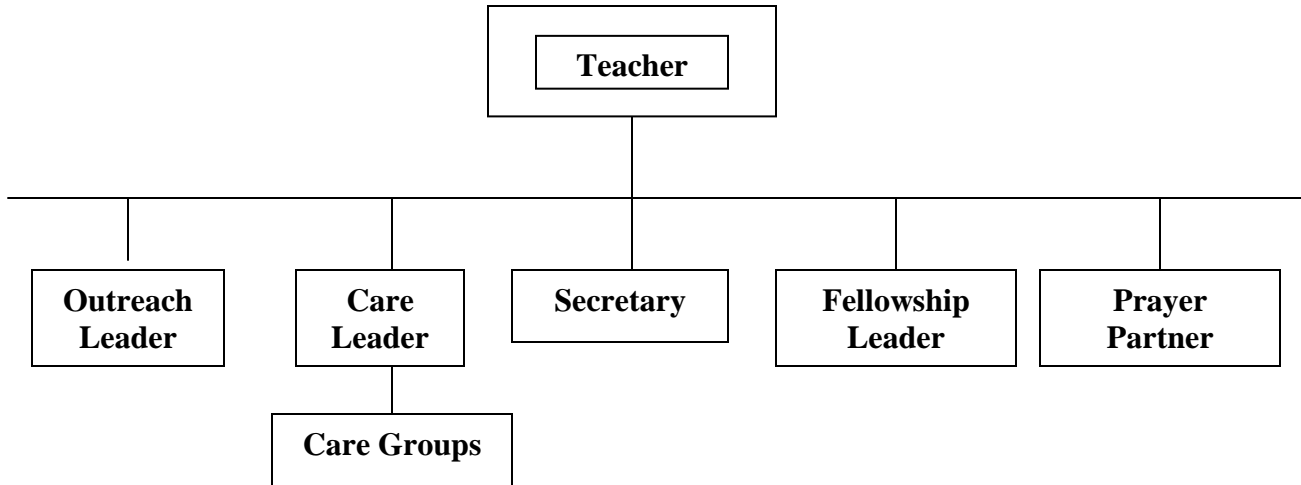
CLASS _____

TELEPHONE _____

PREPARED LEADERS

A leader is anyone who does anything in service in the Sunday School. This includes general leaders, teachers, assistant teachers, helpers, people reachers, care leaders, greeters, hospitality leaders, secretaries and anyone who serves. The higher the number of leaders, the greater involvement and higher the attendance.

BASIC ADULT CLASS ORGANIZATION



Adult Organizational Structure. Every adult class should have at least the following:

- a. TEACHER – Responsible to lead in the studying of God’s word on Sunday morning. Serves as the class leader.
- b. OUTREACH LEADER – Leads the class to make specific plans to discover prospects and make contacts.
- c. CARE LEADER – Organizes the class into groups of approximately 8 people each. Enlists group leaders to minister to their group and contact them when absent.
- d. SECRETARY – Keeps accurate and up-to-date records.
- e. FELLOWSHIP LEADER – Plans fellowships to build community.
- f. PRAYER PARTNER – Prays for the needs of the class and Sunday School.

Other Class Leaders:

- a. ASSOCIATE TEACHER – Teaches when needed. May be a teacher-in-training.
- b. WORSHIP LEADER – Helps the class focus on having a daily quiet time and being involved in church worship opportunities.
- c. DISCIPLESHIP LEADER – Makes the class aware of church discipleship opportunities.
- d. MINISTRIES LEADER – Helps people find a place of service in cooperation with the leadership of the church.

CLASS LEADERS UPDATE

NAME	LEADERSHIP POSITION	TELEPHONE	E-MAIL
TEACHER			

TOTAL NUMBER OF LEADERS _____

PLANNING MEETINGS AND PREPARATION EVENTS

Two aspects of Sunday School leader planning are important.

PLANNING MEETINGS

APPROACHES

WEEKLY PLANNING MEETING – Sunday School leaders come together for general information and to plan for next Sunday. Sometimes there is a lesson overview for adults and ideas for the next Sunday. Preschool, children and youth leaders may meet individually to plan for next Sunday in their groups.

OR

MONTHLY EXTENDED MEETING – Sunday School leaders are brought together about once a month for large group communication. All Sunday School leaders may meet together at the beginning for communication and training during the first part of the meeting. Then individual classes meet in their age groups for class planning. Another approach is that all adult leaders, youth leaders, children's leaders, and preschool leaders meet in their groups for the rest of the time to plan after the large group communication.

All classes meet each week on their own to plan for the work of the class.

NOTE: SEND A CARD WITH THE DETAILS OF THE MONTHLY MEETING A WEEK BEFORE. CALL ALL TEACHERS THE WEEK BEFORE THE MONTHLY MEETING AND REMIND THEM. TEACHERS CONTACT OTHER LEADERS IN THEIR CLASS.

SINCE THERE IS A MONTH TO PREPARE MAKE SURE THERE IS GOOD CONTENT AND PREPARATION. MAKE THIS MEETING HIGH IMPACT.

DYNAMIC LEADERSHIP MEETINGS

BENEFITS

- Encourages and brings the leaders together as a team.
- Brings into focus the mission of the Sunday School.
- Solves problems and improves administration.
- Promotes outreach, fellowship and ministry.
- Evaluates strengths and weaknesses.
- Improves communication.
- Develops spiritual leaders.
- Keeps a focus on goals.
- Provides training in skills.
- Improves teaching, outreach and ministry.
- Church growth and health.

FOUR KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

1. Plan the best time to have the meetings.
2. Promote the meetings to every leader.
3. Provide good structure and content for the meetings.
4. Organize the classes for mission.

CLASS PLANNING QUESTIONS
FULLFILLING CHRIST'S MISSION

- What are the ministry needs of those in our class?

- Who has been absent and needs a contact?

- Who will we contact and invite to our class? What unchurched friends, family, work associates, neighbors or others could we invite? What are our plans for outreach contacts?

- Do we need to plan for our next fellowship?

- What needs to be planned for teaching?

- Does our room need to be cleaned? Are there any space needs?

- How can our class grow closer in our devotion to God?

**TWO EXAMPLES
OF MONTHLY LEADERSHIP MEETINGS**

OUR SUNDAY SCHOOL
BEING ON MISSION WITH CHRIST

Large Group

Opening Prayer Time

In Matthew 28:18, Jesus said: “*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*” (KJV)
There is no doubt about it. Jesus has a mission on this earth.

READ Matthew 28:19-20.

Jesus has all power as he goes about His mission. He calls us as Sunday School leaders to be a part of His mission. Christ’s mission for us in Sunday School is.....

1. To reach the unchurched
2. To build people up in spiritual maturity. (Teach God’s word, minister, and care for one another).
3. To send the people out to serve God and share their faith with others.

There is a beautiful illustration of God’s power found in the Old Testament.

READ Isaiah 40:21-22, 25-26, and 28-31.

“*They shall run and not be weary.*” As we join Christ in His mission, he gives us His power to accomplish His purpose. He gives us the strength to soar on wings like eagles. The apostle Paul described this as running the good race.

Have you ever heard how the mother eagle teaches her babies to fly?

READ Deuteronomy 32:11.



HOW DOES THE EAGLE LEARN TO FLY?
(Beautiful illustration of our fulfilling God's mission for the
Sunday School)

The mother eagle brings the babies into the nest. She cares enough to build a giant nest. She brings the baby eagles to a place of care and nurture.

The mother eagle builds the babies up in maturity. These babies belong to her. She cares about them. She feeds them and their wings grow stronger and their bodies grow larger. The nest is a warm and comfortable place to be. This is where the babies are cared for and grow into maturity.

The mother eagle sends them out. The baby eagles desire to stay in the nest because it is a safe and secure place. However, they are now mature and must go out of the nest to fly. They must leave the nest to be the creature God intended for them to be.

The mother comes to the nest and begins to beat the nest with her big wings. The baby eagles are now called upon to do something that they have never done before – fly. This is inconvenient and uncomfortable for them. The baby eagles do not fly well at first. They fall from the nest but the mother eagle flies underneath them and lifts them up again, until, at last, each baby eagle is flying alone. Eventually they are sent out to be the creation that God intended.

READ II Corinthians 5:17.

There is a question that every class needs to consider - **Are we fulfilling Christ's mission for us as a class?**

Are we on mission with Christ?

What is our class doing to reach the unchurched?

As we study God's word, do we discover truths to practice in our lives?

Are people in our class ministering to people on our roll?

Do people in our class know how to share the Gospel?

Are people in our class sharing their faith?

Have people in our class found places to serve Christ in the class, the church and the world?

Prayer Time

Lead a prayer acknowledging the desire for the Sunday School to be on mission with Christ.

Class Groups

Break into smaller groups. Ask each class to meet together with their leaders. If someone is the only person present from their class, they may join with one of the other class groups to share and get ideas.

Use the “***Sunday School Class on Mission***” **Planning Sheet** during this portion of the meeting. Make copies so that every person in the group has a copy. **Give each group 20-30 minutes to talk about the three items.** Classes can continue to use this as a planning tool after the meeting. All preschool workers may want to be in the same group. The same is true for children and youth workers. You may want to designate in advance someone from each age group (preschool/children/youth) to lead their groups. The teacher from each adult class should meet with their class leaders.

Return to Large Group

Give people an opportunity to comment on the importance of being on mission with Christ and share any ideas that were discussed in their group.

Share prayer requests, then close in prayer.

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS ON MISSION
ADULT CLASS PLANNING SHEET

1. REACH THE UNCHURCHED.

- a. How can we discover unchurched people to invite to our class?
- b. Who do we know who could be invited to our class? (Friends, family, neighbors, work associates, and others.)
- c. What is our immediate plan to bring others to our class? Will we bring people with us or meet them at a designated place at the church?
- d. Is our class open to the leadership of the Holy Spirit in inviting people to our class? Do we pray that God will lead us to people to invite?
- e. Will we bring unchurched people to the worship service and sit with them?

*What is our plan to fulfill this part of
Christ's mission for our class?*

2. BUILD BELIEVERS IN SPIRITUAL MATURITY.

- a. Is there a definite application of the scripture to life each week?
- b. Are we encouraging people in our class to have a daily quiet time?
- c. What are the ministry needs in our class?
- d. How can we minister to those who are not currently attending? Are there special needs that could be areas of ministry for the church?
- e. Do we need to plan a fellowship and invite everyone on our roll as well as some unchurched people?

3. SENDING CLASS MEMBERS OUT FOR MINISTRY.

- a. Are members discovering their places of service in our class? Who is responsible in our class for outreach, fellowship, and care ministry?
- b. Are class members serving in other areas in the church?
- c. Are class members going out to serve with our children on Sunday morning?
- d. Are class members encouraged to share the gospel with others and provided materials such as a tract on the plan of salvation?
- e. Are class attendees encouraged to accept Christ, be baptized, and join the church if they have not already?

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS ON MISSION

PRESCHOOL, CHILDREN, or YOUTH LEADERS PLANNING SHEET

1. REACH THE UNCHURCHED

- a. What families could be reached by ministering to their children in the Sunday School? Who do we know who could be reached by ministering to their children?
- b. How can we discover and reach teenagers? (For YOUTH CLASSES to discuss)
- c. Do we minister to parents when the children visit our class?
- d. What are some special events for preschool, children or youth that our church could provide that would help us discover unchurched families?

2. TEACH FOR SPIRITUAL MATURITY

- a. What are some effective things we are doing in teaching our age groups? What are some creative things that we are doing?
- b. What are the ministry needs in our class?
- c. How can we minister to the parents of the children who attend?
- d. Do we need to plan a fellowship at times for the workers in our age group area?
- e. How can we minister to those on our roll (and parents) who do not attend?

3. INVOLVEMENT IN MINISTRY

- a. Do we as workers see our ministry as a place to serve God's purposes and make a difference in children's lives?
- b. Do we encourage one another as leaders in our area of service?
- c. Do we have the resources we need? Do we have the commitment to share Christ with others?

Our Sunday School

The Power and Presence of God Through Prayer

Large Group

The word of God gives us as Sunday School leaders a wonderful word of encouragement.

READ Philippians 4:6-7

PRAY for the Sunday School, the leaders, and those who attend. PRAY for God's presence and power in the work of the Sunday School.

Enlist someone in advance to share a 3-minute testimony at this time of how God answered prayer in a time of need.

God is present with us in each Sunday School class. He is present with us in our outreach and ministry. His power is released and lives are touched when we pray.

WHAT HAPPENS THROUGH THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AS WE PRAY

- When we pray together we are in God's very presence. God is present with us in the Sunday School. We can praise Him.
- God becomes our source of strength when we pray together.
- God makes us effective in service when we pray.
- Individuals and our classes become growing and healthy when we pray.
- Children learn how to pray in Sunday School.
- A class can express love and devotion when we pray.
- God gives direction for applying biblical truths as well as for outreach and ministry when we pray.
- God is pleased when we pray out of a spirit of love and commitment to Him.
- We grow in our understanding of God as we pray.
- We can commit together to do God's will as we pray.
- We discover the needs of one another for ministry as we share prayer requests.
- Our class has an expectancy that God is going to do something special as we pray.
- Praying together gives comfort and direction.
- Prayer strengthens our families and helps in times of difficulties.
- Praying together reveals what is on our hearts.
- Prayer gives us an opportunity to confess our sins. Prayer in Sunday School sometimes encourages us to confess sins at a time when we are alone with God. Prayer helps us to accept God's forgiveness.
- Prayer strengthens our relationship to one another in our class.
- Through prayer, God helps us to focus with care on those who are unchurched.
- Prayer gives our class the opportunity to express our thankfulness to God.
- Prayer gives the power to accomplish God's purpose and mission for our class.

- When we pray in Sunday School we are often away from distractions. We can focus on God.
- Prayer is a key part of our class growing and being healthy.
- When people in the class share problems or crises that seem to have no answer, God is involved through prayer.
- Prayer is an encourager when there is discouragement in the class or among the leaders.
- Prayer teaches us to wait on God by faith when He seems to be silent.
- Prayer brings unity to the class as well as our church.

GOD'S PROMISES FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL AS WE PRAY

READ I John 5:14

Give those present an opportunity to share prayers that have been answered through the Sunday School.

A MONTH OF PRAYER

Designate a month to pray for everyone on the Sunday School roll. Here's how it works.....

ADULT AND YOUTH CLASSES

On the first Sunday a handout will be provided for your class entitled, "*Class Prayer Needs*". Fill in the names of everyone present. Give an opportunity for those present to share any prayer needs for their family. Forward a copy of the completed handout to the pastor's office so that he will be aware of any needs, such as hospitalizations.

Ask those who attend your class and are present on this Sunday to take the handouts entitled "*Telephone Discovery Prayer Needs*". Write the names of everyone not present today on one of these handouts. Your class will need a roll with telephone numbers. Ask people in the class to telephone the person on this handout and simply ask them if there are any needs that the class could pray for them about at this time. Each couple or individual should receive one call. Write the prayer request on the handout and return it to the teacher for class prayer, then forward the prayer request to the pastor's office for any information he may need.

Some of the people called will be inactive. This gives a wonderful opportunity to minister to them.

Make it your goal to call everyone within the next two weeks. Some calls may need to be made later. Continue to pray for needs and minister to people at the end of the month.

PRESCHOOL AND CHILDREN'S WORKERS

Call the parents of the children to determine if they have prayer needs. Use the "*Telephone Discovery Prayer Needs*" handout. This will give another important ministry touch.

“QUOTE”

“I served as a Christian Education Minister in the local church for about 25 years. One of the most fulfilling things for me was to walk through each Sunday School classroom during the week. I would begin in the preschool area and pray in each room for the leaders and every child who would be present the coming Sunday. I would move to the children’s area and then to the youth area and do the same thing. I would go to each adult classroom and pray for the teacher and for those who would be present on the coming Sunday.

I prayed that God would do something special in each person’s life as a result of being in Sunday School. Even though I did not know who would be present the next Sunday, God did, and he blessed as a result. Praying expectantly for next Sunday releases God’s power. One of the most important things that you can do is to have someone praying in your classroom during the week for those who will be present on Sunday.”

Rick Ellison

CLOSING PRAYER

Conclude by having the class leaders go to their Sunday School rooms and pray for the needs of their class and its members.

CLASS PRAYER NEEDS

TEACHER'S NAME _____ TELEPHONE _____

Name	Prayer Needs

TELEPHONE DISCOVERY PRAYER NEEDS

Your Name: _____

Person Called: _____

Telephone #: _____ Date called: _____

Let the person or family know that you are calling to see if there is anything that they would like prayer for at this time. Let them know that your class will be praying for them.

PRAYER REQUEST:

**Please forward this to the class teacher and forward a copy to the pastor's office.*

TELEPHONE DISCOVERY PRAYER NEEDS

Your Name: _____

Person Called: _____

Telephone #: _____ Date called: _____

Let the person or family know that you are calling to see if there is anything that they would like prayer for at this time. Let them know that your class will be praying for them.

PRAYER REQUEST:

**Please forward this to the class teacher and forward a copy to the pastor's office.*

PREPARATION EVENTS

At least once a year provide special training and motivation for your Sunday School leaders. This can be done by:

- An appreciation dinner for your leaders before the new year begins. Bring in a speaker to motivate. You can also provide training in your church in conjunction with the dinner.
- Provide special training at other times at the church. Promote associational Sunday School training events.
- Promote State Sunday School events at Shocco Springs or in regionals. A regional training event for all age groups is available within an hour of most locations. Contact the Sunday School office for more information.

ALABAMA BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Church Name _____

Telephone _____

E-Mail Address _____

Yes I would like to partner with the Sunday School office in reaching our goals by . . .

- Submitting goals using the Standard of Excellence for feedback and ideas.
- Sending in a progress report each January, May and September.
- Contacting us for ideas or there is a barrier to reaching goals.
- Receiving e-mail free helps.

Please complete and return this information at one of our Sunday School Training conferences or by mailing to:

Rick Ellison
Office of Sunday School
State Board of Missions
P. O. Box 11870
Montgomery, Alabama 36111-0870