



Barriers to Sunday School Growth

LEADERSHIP LESSON 30: BARRIERS TO SUNDAY SCHOOL GROWTH

OUTLINE BY JERRI HERRING

Through the years there have been many papers, conferences and seminars relating to the issue of barriers. Being the simple minded person I am I have always thought you could take all that information and “boil” it down to 3 things.

FIRST Barrier:

Attitude. On any given Sunday morning **everyone arrives with an attitude**. The first time attenders are apprehensive and concerned that they will “fit in”. They worry about who will be teaching their children. Many are not accustomed to regular Sunday School attendance so they worry that they will be embarrassed, etc. Their focus is on Me, My, Mine.

Members come expecting to have their parking space, their chair in Sunday School and their pew during worship. The focus is on Me, My, Mine! Do you see the problem?

The attitude of the members, both teachers and pupils will need to shift in order to provide the shelter and a caring environment for “them”!

Attitudes are like opinions . . . every body has one. They are formed by **circumstances** but can be **transformed** by the power of the Holy Spirit. The adult Sunday School teachers have opportunity to change the culture of their class by adjusting their attitude. Do we really need a larger room or do I need to lead my class to birth another class. Ministry through small groups is something we all talk about but here are some essentials for removing attitudinal barriers of small groups:

1. **Understand that everyone needs to know if they are liked.**
2. **Everyone needs to feel valuable to the group.**
3. **Acceptance is necessary for people to assimilate into the group.**
4. **Every person attending a small group needs to be challenged.**
5. **Every Christian needs to be growing.**

By the way . . . prospects are asking themselves those 5 questions: am I liked, am I valuable, am I accepted, am I challenged, am I growing. Positive answers to those questions depend on positive attitudes!

SECOND Barrier:

Over-attachment to a place. I have been working with church leaders for over 40 years but I continue to be amazed at the **battles that are fought for space/or places**. I am a firm believer that churches need to have a space policy. No one is allowed to put up their own window treatments, buy their own chairs, paint their own room or purchase their own carpet.

All of those things create an emotional ownership to that space so that when time comes to move classes around people get upset and defensive.

THIRD Barrier:

Over attachment to a teacher. When did it become the roll of a Sunday School class to vote on their teacher or to enlist their own teacher? Why is it important for a class not to be called by the last name of the teacher? The simple answer is these become barriers of entitlement and suggest ownership.



Barriers to Sunday School Growth

LEADERSHIP LESSON 30: BARRIERS TO SUNDAY SCHOOL GROWTH OUTLINE BY JERRI HERRING

BARRIER 1 _____

Attitudes are formed by _____

Attitudes are _____ by power of the Holy Spirit

Five essentials for removing attitudinal barriers:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

BARRIER 2

What creates an attitude of emotional ownership?

BARRIER 3

What creates an attitude of entitlement and ownership?
