

SUNDAY SCHOOL & SMALL GROUP OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

The more options you consider doing, the greater the effect it will have on your group.

Church Health Suggestions:

Check the ones you want to apply, talk about it with your class and the pastor, get more training if needed.

- Arrange your class in a circle instead of rows. This helps increase fellowship, intimacy and discussion.
- Remove extra chairs so that your class is sitting together, not separated.
- Don't sit along the wall far away from each other. If possible, move the chairs closer together in a circle.
- If you are the teacher, don't sit behind a desk or stand up. Instead, sit in the circle with your class.
- If there is clutter in the room, remove it and clean and organize the room.
- If needed, paint the walls, fix stains on the ceiling, replace broken blinds, clean the carpet stains.
- Do old outdated pictures or posters on the wall need to be removed or replaced.
- If there is a bulletin board, make it current and attractive.
- Replace, remove or repair broken chairs.
- Ask your class/group to read the chapter or verses at home before they come and share what stood out to them.
- Divide your meeting time into 6 tasks and have a different person lead each task. Rotate the people every week.
 - Task 1 Ask people to share "What was something you were thankful for last week?"
"What was something that was stressful this week?"
"What can we be praying for you about this week?"
Lead in prayer for these requests, our church and our nation.
 - Task 2 Be the facilitator and ask everyone to share the things that stood out to them in the chapter they read.
 - Task 3 Have someone paraphrase the scripture you are studying today by memory in their own words.
 - Task 4 Have someone read the passage out loud that you are about to discuss.
 - Task 5 Have someone make a few comments about the passage and facilitate discussion questions about it.
Some good standard questions are "What do we learn about God?" "What do we learn about people?"
"Is there someone in this passage you can identify with?" "From these verses, what do you want to get better at?"
 - Task 6 Talk about the plans and details of the service project your class is going to do in the next two months.
- Of the one hour your group meets, make sure you are not lecturing more than 5 or 10 minutes, if at all.
- Consider sitting together as a class when you go to the worship service.
- If there is a guest in your class, make sure that one or more people sit with them in the worship service.
- Contact every member and every previous guest/prospect every week by email, text or phone.
- Have a monthly fellowship for your class. Invite all class members, family members, prospects, friends.
- When a guest visits your group, make sure and introduce them. Get their contact information – phone & email.
- At least once a month, ask a group member to share their faith story in 5 minutes – how they came to Christ.
- Once a quarter, ask a group member to take 3-5 minutes and explain the gospel to the class. Rotate who does this.
- Always have one to three class members that you are preparing to lead a new group on their own.
- Make it your goal to try and birth a new class/group every year. (Not split your class). That means a person or a couple in your group are praying and preparing to invite people outside your group to help them start a new class.

Sunday School Ministry

1. The general problem with creating a good Sunday school class is not the content of the curriculum. All the curriculums have good Biblical content. But the book doesn't tell you how to teach, lead discussion, and make disciples.
2. Have your teachers ever experienced being in a class that was good at making disciples, encouraging discussion and training new leaders? Teachers do what they think they are supposed to do, which is give the information from the curriculum by lecture. They may try to do everything by themselves because this is the only model they have seen.
3. Good classes help members to read the Bible at home and talk about it when they come to the group. If you ask members, and expect them to do it, and expect them to share what they learned, then many of your group will read the Bible and it will change their lives.
4. Good classes build meaningful friendships. They spend time together outside of class eating, talking, sitting together in worship and doing service projects. They are intentional to do this. They don't let people come to their class and remain anonymous and neglected and friendless.
5. Effective classes learn to facilitate discussion so that everyone participates and engages. You can have large SS classes with 20 or 30 people, but they need to divide up into small discussion groups of 4 to 6 people during the lesson.
6. Superior classes are deliberate in developing new leaders. They share the leadership every week so that new leaders get to practice and learn.
7. Classes that grow larger are intentional about reaching out – calling, texting, emailing, and social media. They develop an ever-growing list of prospects and contact them weekly with news about what the class is doing next. They use monthly fellowships as a way to invite new people to meet their class and build friendships.
8. Friends sit with friends when they go to the worship service. If your class members do not sit together, chances are that they are not genuine friends. When you walk into the service, look for a class member and sit with them on purpose.
9. People who listen to lectures are not actively engaged in learning. Your goal should be to have as many people as possible talking, praying, sharing what they learned, and asking questions. You do that by preparing good discussion questions ahead of time and helping everyone have a chance to answer. The goal of discussion is not to have one person give a pretty good answer to the question. The goal is to get everyone involved and let them speak what they are thinking about and how to apply scripture to their lives. 30 minutes of discussion is better than 30 minutes of lecture.
10. Sometimes the physical setup of the classroom is not ideal. If the teacher sits behind a desk and the class sits in rows, you are automatically creating a difficult environment for learning and discussion and fellowship.
11. When we recruit someone to be the “teacher” we hardly ever ask them to train and equip more people capable of teaching and leading, but we should. What if we changed the title from “Sunday School teacher” to “Leadership Trainer”. A title like that would communicate our desire not for them to teach a “lesson” but for them to teach people to become disciples who make disciples.
12. A SS class leader should have a realistic awareness of the spiritual condition of the members of their class. They may not often read their Bible. They don't know how to explain the gospel. They almost never share their faith story with others. They are afraid to pray out loud. They don't have friendships with other class members. They don't know how to lead a Bible study. They don't often participate in serving others in the church or the community.
13. The goal of a SS teacher should not be to “hold on” to everyone in their class. Instead, their goal is to multiply and send out new leaders to start new groups every year.