

Agenda for An Education Staff Discussion/Training

Following this agenda are 8 pages of topics to discuss, things to consider and things to apply in your ministry. If you work your way through these pages, I think it might provide your Education Team with several months of things to talk about and consider implementing.

1. Decide what you believe about these 10 things. (Best Practices)
2. Surveys and Experience Indicate These Things May Be True. (Identify our Challenges)
3. A few goals for a stronger Sunday School.
4. Understanding the dynamics of change.
5. Brainstorming about possible goals. Write 2 ideas for each one.
6. A big picture. What do healthy churches look like?
7. Begin making a list of some baby steps of change you want to make. How, when?
8. Share your steps of progress and celebrate when you meet with your leaders.

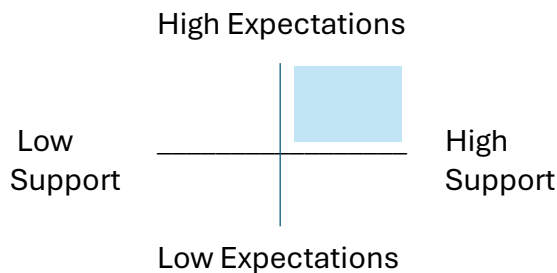
Decide What You Believe About These 10 Things (Best Practices)

1. People learn best when they **practice** something many times and make corrections. How does that relate to our teaching at church with children, students and adults?

- [The Talent Code](#) by Daniel Coyle
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dY7QNxXbziA>

2. **High support** combined with **high expectations** is the best way to learn and grow. Jesus did this with his disciples. (**Mt 16:24** take up your cross; **Mt 28:20** I am with you always)

- [High Expectations](#) by Thom Rainer



How would you apply this to your Bible studies at church?

3. It's better to lift weights, run sprints and practice blocking and tackling - than to only listen to a lecture about how to play football.
It's better to **do things that help you grow** – than to only hear a lecture about God.

We can't mass-produce disciples in a worship service. It also takes things like:

small groups of people (2-8?)	engaging discussions	homework
repeated practice	friendship	servicing others
prayer	Bible reading	scripture memory
learning to explain the gospel	learning to tell your faith story.	

- The secret to improvement? Relentless practice ... passion ... patience ... perseverance ... learning from failures ... seeking feedback ... constantly pushing your boundaries ... find joy in the journey, not just the end goal. (Copilot)
- **James 1:22** Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves...

How would you apply this idea to your discipleship strategy at your church?

4. **The more people involved** in using their spiritual gifts in a class – the better it is. Getting involved in a small group with spiritual people who are all engaging is motivating and encouraging. We need teaching and servicing and encouraging and mercy and leadership.

- **I Cor 12:21** The eye cannot say to the hand “I don't need you.”
- The D-Life Process <https://www.livethedlife.com/process.html#/>

What might be an advantage of all the people in a group helping to lead, share, discuss?

5. **Equipping more leaders** and teachers is important and a priority for our church's health.

- Teachers could train new leaders every week or on a regular basis of some kind.
- We could take as many as we can to a free local ministry workshop (Assoc, GBMB)
- We could follow-up a training workshop by brainstorming, application & evaluation.
- 62 brainstorming topics for leaders <https://midstateassociation.weebly.com/>
- **Mt 9:37** The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

What are the benefits of ongoing leadership training instead of once a year?

6. **A team** using their various skills, knowledge, passion and time can accomplish more than an individual. A class can be a team and work together to serve others.

- SEAL Team Six places immense value on teamwork, emphasizing that trust, collaboration, and a shared purpose are essential for success. (Copilot)
- **Mt 10:5** These twelve Jesus sent out ...

What are some of the advantages of teamwork instead of mainly doing it yourself?

7. Building real and deeper Christian **friendships** is important. It doesn't happen with a once-a-year potluck supper after church. We have to be intentional to create good opportunities for friendship building in our classes.

- **John 13:34,35** all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another

What are ways that we can help friendships develop in our classes and ministries?

8. If I meet with other leaders/pastors, I might be helped and I might help someone else.

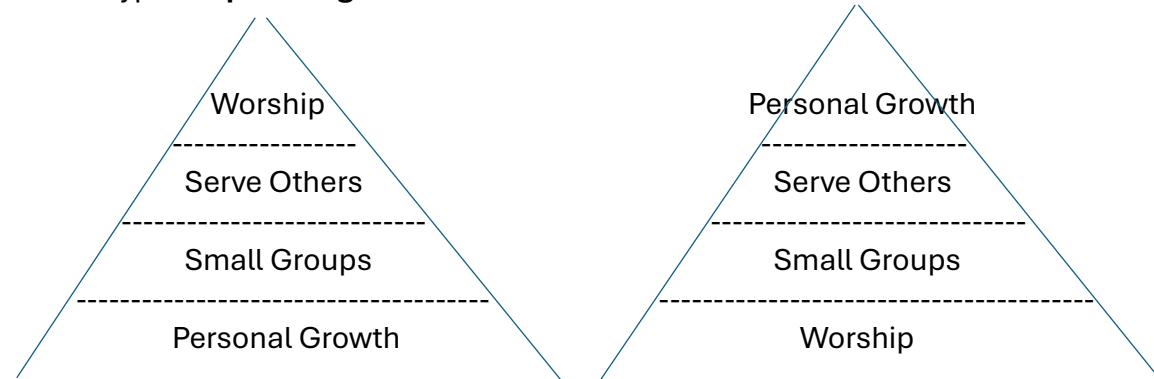
It's helpful to have a regular **meeting with other leaders/pastors** – support each other.

- **Proverbs 27:17** As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another.
- Many Baptist Associations have regular pastor round tables.
 - New Providence (Forsyth) – 10:00 Tuesday morning every other month
 - Lake Wildwood (Macon) – one Tuesday a month for lunch at 11:30
 - Greenwood (Gray) – twice a month, Wednesday at 12:00

9. **Brainstorming before and evaluating after helps us toward excellence.** It can help me and my pastor if we talk on a regular basis (weekly?) about our ministry – what we just did, what we are doing this week, and what the plans are for the next few weeks or months.

- What went well? What can we celebrate?
- What can we improve next time? What will we need to be successful?

10. What type of **spiritual growth** model do we think is most effective?



Whichever model you choose, how does it affect your discipleship strategy?

Surveys & Experience Indicate These Things May Be True. (Identify Our Challenges)

1. Many people indicate in surveys that they have 2 or 3 good friends. They are most likely acquaintances with most of the people at your church, not friends.
2. Many people attend SS and church and don't have meaningful conversations.
3. Only a small percentage of church members read their Bible during the week.
4. Many SS attenders do not read the lesson ahead of time before they attend class.
5. Some SS teachers read the pages of the Quarterly out loud to the class word for word.
6. Many SS teachers do not know how to facilitate discussion. They either skip the discussion questions or they stop the discussion when one person answers.
7. A few church members have verses about the gospel memorized, but many don't.
8. Many church members do not know how to explain the gospel or don't feel comfortable.
9. Events and fellowships are helpful for church members to invite a friend to church.
10. Only a few SS classes schedule regular fellowships and invite guests and friends.
11. Many SS teachers do not think it is their responsibility to train more teachers.
12. Many church members are not intentional to make a guest feel welcome.
13. When a teacher asks for prayer requests, a handful will respond, not the whole class.
14. Many people can't remember much about the SS lesson or the sermon the next day.
15. Some SS classes do not look for ways that their class can serve others.
16. Many churches do not have classes for single adults who are 40+% of the population.
17. Some SS teachers see their job as "teaching a lesson" not making disciples.
18. Some SS classes do not communicate with members every week – email, text, phone
19. Some SS classes don't keep a chart of attendance for their class members.
20. Some SS classes are not intentional to sit together in the worship service.
21. We often lower expectations to make things easy, instead of raising expectations to help people grow in skill, confidence and knowledge.
22. Small discussion groups are more effective. Divide your class of 30-100 in small groups.

A FEW POSSIBLE GOALS FOR A STRONGER SUNDAY SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

- Additional classes to reach all 10 adult age groups (5 decades of married and single)
- On-the-job training of new teachers
- Growing faithful, available and teachable disciples
- Encouraging deeper friendships
- Increase learning engagement during class. There are many ways to do this.
- Better communication and care for members
- Help guests feel welcome
- Pray for everyone every week in class
- Gain confidence in personal evangelism
- Classes becoming action and serving-oriented
- Helping the worship service experience
- Help new church members be assimilated

Understanding the Dynamics of Change

- There will be resistance to change. This is normal. It takes time and being intentional
- Change is uncomfortable and scary and feels like a loss to some people.
- Understand the “curve” – Innovators, Early Adopters, Late Adopters, Skeptics
- Some don’t want to learn new ways - “I’ve been a teacher for 20 years”
- Many people learn by seeing how something is done, not by being told to do it.
- Look for baby steps of change, rather than 10 radical changes all at once.
- Look for enthusiastic people who can help you make a change & lead by example.
- Some people are not “tech” people – email, text, websites, computers, etc.
- Introverts and extroverts will respond differently to new ideas. Both are capable.
- Our motive for change is to help our “friends, children, grandchildren, neighbors”
- Accountability helps change happen. Evaluate what is happening and adapt.
- We can encourage change to happen, we don’t force it or embarrass people.

Brainstorming about possible goals - Write 2 ideas for each

1. We need more SS classes to reach all 10 of these groups (10 groups X 25 = 250 adults)

Married 20s

Married 30s

Married 40s

Married 50s

Married 60+

Single 20s

Single 30s

Single 40s

Single 50s

Single 60+

2. How can we recruit and train new teachers and group leaders on a weekly basis with on-the-job training? Regular mentoring of new teachers will help us form new groups.

3. How can our classes and groups be more effective in growing disciples, not attenders?

4. How can class members go beyond being acquaintances and become friends?

5. How can we increase learning engagement during the Bible study when a class or small group meets each week?

6. How can our classes and groups better engage and communicate with –
a) members b) members not in a class, c) new members, d) guests e) outsiders?

7. How can our SS classes make guests feel more welcome and included?

8. How can we pray for everyone in our class every week?

9. How can our classes help our members practice telling their faith stories and help our classes become more evangelistic-oriented?

10. How can we help our classes to be action-oriented, and look for ways to serve others?

11. How can our SS classes help our worship service to be more dynamic?

12. Could our SS classes be used to assimilate new members and new Christians? How?

The Big Picture: What Do Healthy Churches Look Like?

A healthy church nurtures its members and positively impacts the wider community. A healthy church is a vibrant, dynamic community focused on spiritual growth, support, and outreach. Key attributes include:

1. Strong Leadership

Leaders who are committed to their faith, have a clear vision, and are dedicated to serving their congregation. Disciplined planning, brainstorming, evaluation, pursuit of excellence, and recruitment and training of new leaders.

2. Engaged Community

Active participation from members in worship, events, and service projects.

3. Sound Doctrine

Teaching and preaching that is biblically grounded and relevant to contemporary life.

4. Effective Communication

Open and transparent communication channels between leadership and members.

5. Community Outreach

Programs that serve and engage the broader community, demonstrating the church's commitment to social justice and compassion.

6. Spiritual Growth

Opportunities for members to grow in their faith through worship, Bible studies, and personal habits and reflection.

7. Support Systems

Providing care and support for members' emotional, physical, and spiritual needs.

8. Financial Stewardship

Responsible management of resources to support the church's mission and goals. Generosity, control of expenses and wise use of volunteers are all needed.

9. Adaptability

Willingness to evolve and adapt to meet the changing needs of the congregation and society.

In each of these 9 areas:

- Where are we doing well? Give examples.
- How could we improve? Give examples.

Write a Few of the Baby Steps of Change You Want to Build a Consensus For & Implement

Examples:

1. We will ask every class member to read the scripture during the week and share two of their favorite verses and why they liked it when they come to class Sunday morning.
2. We will set aside empty chairs and sit in a circle close to one another.
3. Our class will have a monthly fellowship of some kind and invite friends and family.

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- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
 - 6.
 - 7.
 - 8.
 - 9.
 - 10.

EVERY WEEK IN OUR STAFF MEETING

What went well last week? What can we celebrate?

What can we improve next time? What will we need to be successful?

See the home page for more ideas for discussion: <https://midstateassociation.weebly.com/>