

The background of the cover is a landscape photograph. The foreground is a lush green field, possibly a meadow or a field of tall grass. In the middle ground, there are several rolling hills with a mix of green and brownish-yellow vegetation. The sky is a vibrant blue with scattered white clouds. The overall scene is bright and clear, suggesting a sunny day.

SUCCESSFUL LESSON PREPARATION

ELMER L. TOWNS

SUCCESSFUL LESSON PREPARATION
ELMER L. TOWNS

BAKER BOOK HOUSE
Grand Rapids, Michigan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. GETTING READY TO TEACH

Prayer Preparation

Long Range Planning

Evaluate the Last Lesson

When to Study

II. WRITING THE LESSON PLAN

Write the Aim

Study the Scripture

Arrange the Lesson in Outline

Write the Conclusion

Write the Introduction Choose the Method

III. YARDSTICK FOR TEACHERS

Being Spiritually Qualified

Being Educationally Qualified

Being Diligent in Weekly Preparation

Having a Well-Rounded Personality

IV. AIMS GIVE DIRECTION TO TEACHING

Concerning the Pupil

Concerning the Curriculum

Concerning the Teacher

V. A TEACHER IS PART OF A TEAM

VI. SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

INTRODUCTION

So you're a Sunday School teacher. . .

Fine. . .

You have the greatest opportunity of your life to serve God. But opportunity brings responsibility. You can invest your life in every pupil in your class. First you must work, guide and pray that every person under your teaching comes to a knowledge of Jesus Christ. Second, you must continue working so that each may grow in grace and bring praise to the Saviour.

Are you jittery about the job? This booklet is prepared to introduce you to the "calling" of teaching the Word of God. Here you will see your qualifications and responsibilities, as well as some practical suggestions on how to study and prepare lessons.

Teachers are made not born! Don't get discouraged if the class doesn't go as you expected. Teaching involves laws and you must work with these laws if you expect to accomplish results. Learning the principles of teaching will make you a better teacher.

You've become a part of a very vital throbbing organism and you'll need to know just where you fit in. You won't want to let the others down because you didn't know what was expected of you as a member of the Sunday School Organization in your Church. You'll learn what you can expect in the way of help and fellowship from the other members of the team in this booklet.

This booklet is too short. No one can hope to cover in a few pages all the aspects, problems, approaches and potentials of teaching. I have written what was in my heart, including those things I feel a conscientious Sunday school teacher needs. Also, this booklet is too simple. Teaching is profound and the classroom relationships are involved. Therefore, resolve in your mind to make teaching a life-long stud

But in contrast, this book is too exhaustive. Teaching is simply guiding the learning activities of students. Years ago Mark Hopkins pictured education as a log with a student at one end and the teacher at the other. Sunday school teaching is simply sharing Jesus Christ with your students.

May God use you to reach and teach students for the glory of God.

Elmer L. Towns

I. GETTING READY TO TEACH

Teachers usually think they prepare and teach for their pupils. But the teacher's work will be transformed if he constantly reminds himself that his service is actually to God. Only God is aware of the degree of the teacher's faithfulness, and only God knows the measure of success or failure of each class session. How does God reckon success or failure? What does He require of a Sunday school teacher? It is your responsibility to discover the answer to this question. However, the quality of your preparation will determine the quality of your teaching.

Try to have a special place for study. Most homes have a desk, table or quiet spot to think and meditate. If possible keep your Bible, study helps, reference books at this spot. Also keep paper and pencils handy. The following list will help you get ready for study.

1. Prayer Preparation
2. Long Range Planning
3. Evaluate the Last Lesson
4. When to Study

An endeavor will fail if not properly planned. Just so, your Sunday school class will be a failure if you do not make proper plans for presentation of the Word of God. The oft quoted statement to salesmen applies to Sunday school teaching, "plan your work and work your plan." Therefore, one of the successful criteria for successful Sunday school teaching is, "planning your lesson study."

Prayer Preparation

The teacher is not prepared, until he prepares himself through prayer. Prayer preparation means more than walking into the class and asking students to bow their heads for prayer. Also, prayer preparation means more than asking God to "bless" the time of study and preparation. The following items will add vitality to a lesson when the teacher uses them as prayer guides.

1. *Pray for a teachable spirit.* One of the first aspects of lesson preparation is to ask God for a teachable spirit. Before you can teach others, you must be "taught by the Master Teacher." As a teacher approaches his Scripture lesson he must pray and ask God to guide his study. "Open thou mine eyes that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law (Scriptures)" (Psa. 119:18). But, more than a prayer for God to instruct, the teacher must be willing to learn. "If any man will do his will he shall know of the doctrine." (John 7:17)

2. *Pray for the teaching ministry of the Holy Spirit.* Too often the human teacher sees himself as the only channel in the classroom. Christ has promised, "When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he shall guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Also Jesus promised "the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things" (John 14:26). This promise referred to the Holy Spirit who shall be our teacher. The Holy Spirit indwells the human teacher and wants to instruct through the human teacher.

Lewis S. Chafer, President of Dallas Theological Seminary, said on numerous occasions, "This school has only one teacher- the Holy Spirit." He said this to an audience that included

seventeen seminary professors. Spiritual truth cannot be understood apart from the ministry of God's Holy Spirit. Each professor accepted the dual instructor concept in the classroom.

In one sense, your Sunday school has only one teacher- the Holy Spirit. Unless the Holy Spirit works through teachers, students cannot understand the Bible.

3. *Pray for guidance in lesson preparation.* Anytime you sit down before the Scriptures for lesson preparation, you should ask God to guide your study. Most Christians have a habit of asking God's blessing upon food when they sit for a meal. In the same manner, teachers should establish the habit of asking God's blessing upon the Word of God when they sit down to study. "Trust in the Lord with all thy heart; and lean not to thy own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Prov. 3:5, 6).

4. *Pray for your pupils.* Teaching the Word of God is earnest business done for eternity. The teacher attempts to change the destiny of each pupil. Lost pupils will be presented with solutions and backslidden students will be exhorted to repent. The teacher can't effect the Word of God in the pupils heart, therefore he must avail himself of God's power. The teacher prays for conviction of sin (John 16:7-11), for the impact of Scripture (Rom. 1:16 and for the moving of the Holy Spirit in pupils' lives (Acts 1:8).

Long Range Planning

A Sunday school class is like one inning of a baseball game. You have to see the whole to appreciate the parts. Just so, every Sunday school lesson is a part of the "whole" cycle. Before the students can see the whole, you as the teacher must study and grasp the whole.

The overview is important. At the beginning of a new quarter, scan all thirteen lessons to get the total "overview." Then each lesson is like the spoke in the wheel that completes the cycle of teaching.

Try to visualize the entire quarter's lesson. "Can you see the progress of God's people from slaves in Egypt to their conquest of the Holy Land?" "Can you see the movement of Jesus through the gospels as he gathers twelve disciples to his ultimate crucifixion on Calvary?" "Can you grasp the message of justification and the total outline of the book of Romans?" If you can visualize the whole quarter, then you can better "fit" each lesson into its part.

The overview will help you gather lesson materials. Perhaps you will need a film strip series, flannel graph or a phonograph record. Visual aids are difficult to attain on a Saturday night when you have to teach the lesson the following Sunday morning. An overview will help alert you to needed audio visual aids, thus making you a better teacher.

Evaluate the Last Lesson

"How well did you do on the last lesson?" Before you can prepare your next Sunday school lesson, find out your mistakes and strengths from last week. If you can overcome mistakes in your teaching, this is an indication of professional growth on your part.

The best time for evaluation is immediately after teaching. Usually a teacher attends church after the Sunday school class. Therefore, Sunday afternoon is the earliest time at which

he can evaluate his past lesson. Start your evaluation by viewing your strength. You need the encouragement. What did you do well? Make a list of your strong points, those things you think “went well today.” At what point were the students most interested in your lesson? If you find out why they were interested, you might find one of your strengths.

Next, let’s look at your weaknesses. Every teacher has some weak points, so don’t get an inferiority complex. Honest now, at what point did your students “turn the lesson off”? At what point was there student unrest: Some of the weak factors you may change, others you can’t. But one thing for sure, you are responsible for the weaknesses.

After you’ve found your weaknesses and strengths, make a list of things you’re going to do differently. If you feel that you don’t have the teaching background to even recognize your weaknesses, call in a fellow teacher or the Sunday school superintendent. Have him sit in your class and ask him to honestly give you constructive criticism.

When to Study

We have already said, begin your study on Sunday afternoon and do a little each day. What time of day is best for lesson preparation? This question is difficult to answer, as each person has a time of the day when he is mentally best. When are you in the best frame of mind? When are you most creative? Do your studying then. No rigid prescription can be given when people should study the Word of God. Some people get up early and come out of the sack ready to operate. Others are “late starters.” At ten p.m. they are ready to push their mind into second gear and begin to think.

The following outline will guide you in your week’s preparation.

1. Forget about the dream of studying all day. Most teachers cannot find one large block of time where they can spend three or four hours studying their Sunday school lesson. If you are like the average American, every night is taken with a meeting, TV programs, or business engagements. Do not forget you have family obligations. Therefore, try to set aside a little time each day to study your Sunday school lesson. You may feel like this is asking too much, but should not a Christian set aside some time each day to be alone with God? Why not make your Sunday school lesson one source for personal growth? If God speaks to you through the Scripture portion of your Sunday school curriculum then there is a likelihood He will speak to your students. A little study each day is better than “cramming.”

The following weekly outline has been suggested at many Sunday school workshops. The author does not take credit for writing it, but he does suggest it as a pattern.

Sunday Afternoon - Evaluate the day’s lesson. Read over the next lesson.

Monday-Wednesday - Study the Bible, using the quarterly and other helps.

Thursday-Friday - Plan the actual lesson with aim, method and materials.

Saturday - Gather materials. Review lesson.

Sunday Morning – Review briefly and teach the lesson.

II. WRITING THE LESSON PLAN

The following six steps of lesson preparation should be followed by mature and beginning teachers. Each teacher will give different emphasis to each step; nevertheless, each step should be made.

1. Write the Aim
2. Study the Scriptures
3. Arrange the Lesson in Outline
4. Write the Conclusion
5. Write the Introduction
6. Choose the Method

Write the Aim

Sunday school teaching is not grinding out content. Nor is Sunday school teaching like a little boy playing with blocks, stacking them one upon the other in a hit or miss fashion. Often teaching is considered stacking blocks of content in the minds of the students. When the pile of blocks reaches its limit (the mind absorption of the student), then the small boy says he is finished. The purpose of Sunday school teaching is not to communicate content only. "We teach for decisions."

Before you begin to teach, have in mind a clear decision that you want the pupil to make. This decision may be to accept Christ, to renounce a certain sin, to practice a certain behavior or to change a certain attitude. Try to state your aims briefly in one or two sentences. Determine what you want your students to know (mind), to feel (emotions), and to do (will).

The aim gives direction to your study. Too often, Sunday school teaching has a poor aim or none at all. Teachers aim at nothing and hit it with precise accuracy.

A clear aim guides Bible study.

A clear aim gives unity, order and efficiency to teaching.

A clear aim gives teacher's confidence in the classroom.

A clear aim helps teachers use time efficiently.

A clear aim helps teachers select teaching aids and methods.

A clear aim helps teachers evaluate a lesson.

Study the Scripture

You have already completed your overview, now you are ready to prepare for next Sunday. The first thing you should do is refresh your thinking about the content. Read the Scriptures first. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What is the point of the passage?

2. What problems do I see in the passage?
3. What parallel passage in the Scriptures would shed light on this passage?
4. What are some practical applications in this passage?

After you have spent some time thinking through these questions, consult your Sunday school quarterly. First, read the student's quarterly. This is the only material that the students will have at their disposal as they prepare for the lesson. It's important for you to know what the student will know. Teaching begins "where the student is" and takes the student "where he should be."

Second, read over the teacher's manual. Usually, the teacher's manual contains more content explanation. The teacher's manual contains methodology, how to teach the lesson. Remember, no teacher's manual can make teaching simple or easy. Teaching is hard work. Teacher's manuals were written to make you more effective, not to give you an easy time in preparation. The teacher's manual is written by competent authorities who want to communicate the Word of God in the most effective ways possible. Sometimes, you may not like their suggestions. However, try to follow them.

Now let's turn to other study helps.

1. A Bible commentary. - A reference book that explains the meaning of the verses in the Scriptures.

2. A Bible dictionary. - This reference book will give backgrounds, customs, geography, and the meaning of words in Scripture. You will also find a generous amount of doctrinal explanation in the Bible dictionary.

3. A Bible concordance. - These books will help you find passages of like meaning in Scripture. Suppose you are teaching a lesson on financial stewardship. A Bible concordance will help you find other passages in Scripture that will help you study this topic.

Now comes the question of arranging the Biblical content into a lesson plan. The Bible is the revelation of God; it tells of Jesus Christ, God's son. Every revelation demands a response. Therefore, we must present Biblical content in teaching for a decision. The question that now faces a teacher is, "What content that I have studied may I choose to secure a decision in my pupil's life?"

The aim will determine what content is selected for the lesson plan. A lesson plan is a step by step arrangement of the content, methods and procedures which the teacher intends to use in order to help students learn and accomplish the lesson aim. (See page 31 for sample lesson plan.)

Arrange the Lesson in Outline

Lesson preparation is not done by writing an introduction. An introduction bridges from the student's life to the content, and the teacher must know the content before he builds the bridge. Therefore, the first step is to develop content into an organized whole. It should be sequential, building fact upon fact. Some of the following ways may be used to organize content:

1. *A series of questions becomes the lesson outline.* As either the teacher or the pupil answers each question, content is thereby filled in. A teacher should write both questions and answers in his lesson plan. If he waits to create questions until he is before his class, the right type of questions may not come. If you try to think of the answers as you stand before your students, you may be caught between home and third. Use more than one type of question. The following list may help you create a variety of questions for teaching:

a. *Factual questions.* Usually the pupil can find the fact in the Bible or in other source material.

b. *Interpretive questions.* The pupil is challenged to interpret a verse of Scripture.

c. *Discussion questions.* An open-end question will bring out opinions and attitudes of pupils.

d. *Exploration questions.* Some questions take the form of a project in which pupils are pointed to a problem and given resources for finding the answer.

e. *Opinion questions.* At times the teacher will want to involve the pupil, by asking him to state an opinion.

2. *A series of propositional statements.* Statements are given to the class and the students are expected to explore the Word of God to find a Biblical basis. If the class is large, perhaps the teacher will have to give the statement and then explain the Scripture that furnishes the proof.

3. *List the Scripture verses with their explanation.* This is a traditional manner of Sunday school teaching and should not be overused by the teacher to the point of boredom.

4. *A modification or combination of the above.* The whole lesson does not have to be written out. Sunday school teaching is not a written speech that is read to the pupils. Try reading a speech or the quarterly and you will drive them from the study of God's Word. Be spontaneous in your presentation. Get pupils to discuss and ask questions. You should interact with them. Points in your outline should be like seeds to be sown, rather than full bloom plants to be admired. Jesus said the Word of God was like seed sown upon the earth. Perhaps as you sow seeds in the minds of your pupils, God will bring forth a full grown plant in their lives.

However, transition sentences should be written out in entirety. These are hinges that turn the lesson from one point to another. As you finish the introduction and move into your first point, you want to keep your pupils' interest. The introduction should have captured their attention. Now keep the pupils by a smooth transition.

Write the Conclusion

Teaching without a conclusion is like fishing without a hook. The fisherman may have the best lure and equipment and be a skilled fisherman, yet if he doesn't have a hook he can't catch fish. If teaching is for decisions, then the conclusion should be designed to have pupils make a decision.

A conclusion is the aim of the Sunday school lesson applied to the life of the pupil resulting in the pupil's decision. The whole element of making a decision should be under the guidance of the teacher.

Some lessons are not concluded, they're just finished. Some teachers talk up to the final minute trying to cram in the last bit of Bible fact, then announce "we'll take up here next Sunday." This teacher doesn't conclude, he just finishes . . . finishes the opportunity for God to work . . . finishes his opportunity to make a change in the pupils' lives . . . and finishes his greatest opportunity in life.

What about the invitation? Should the teacher in the Sunday school class give an invitation, that is, ask children to close their eyes, bow their heads, and raise their hands as an indication they want to receive Christ; For the most part, no. In small Sunday school classes, teachers should take the initiative to speak personally to each student about receiving Christ. If teachers don't have the courage to face pupils with the claims of Christ, they shouldn't hide behind the invitation. However, there may be times when God's spirit works through such invitations, especially when the class is so large that the teacher cannot make a personal contact with each pupil.

A conclusion should summarize your main ideas and refresh the minds of the students. Try to get them to see the unity of the lesson.

Is it all right to have "loose ends" when you come to the end of a lesson? Loose ends are acceptable if they are live ends. Loose ends drive the student from the classroom to seek answers and resolve issues for himself. These live ends are the very art of teaching. However, loose ends that leave the student confused, perplexed and frustrated are a manifestation of poor teaching.

When coming to your conclusion, avoid letting interest lag. Do not introduce new material. You are trying to drive for a decision, new materials may sidetrack students' thoughts. Also, do not conclude by apologizing for a poor lesson. If the lesson is poor, the students will know it. If the class has been poor, you may have introduced doubts into their thoughts about the Word of God.

The conclusion should be short, varied, real, personal, pointed, appropriate.

Write the Introduction

The introduction is the last part of the lesson to be prepared. The purpose of an introduction is to bridge the gap from "where students are" to "where they should be." You must prepare your lesson before you can bridge the gap from the student to that content.

A good introduction catches the attention of the pupil, creates a desire to learn, inspires him to action, and becomes a point of contact.

An introduction should promise the students something. However, like a down payment at the department store, when you promise there is more to follow, you lose your investment without the follow through. Some of the following types of introductions can be used:

1. A story from everyday life.
2. A story from the Scriptures.
3. A current event illustrated by a newspaper clipping.
4. A question, "Who is the tallest?"

5. Use of a visual aid, for example, a model plane for junior boys.
6. A film strip or slides secured from the church library.
7. A quotation from a book or significant author, such as Martin Luther.
8. A picture, for example, one that reflects the lesson to primary children.
9. A drawing on the chalkboard.

Choose the Method

The lesson plan is completed. You have planned your material. Now let's give some attention to methods. Think in terms of two or three methods which can be used with your class. Some of the following points will guide you in choosing the method to use.

1. *Choose a method that is best suited for your lesson aim.* If your aim is to get several opinions from the Scripture passage, choose a panel discussion, debate or forum. If your aim is to indoctrinate, perhaps the best method is lecture or question and answer. If your aim is to communicate "feelings and attitudes," then psycho drama may be your best method.

2. *Choose a method appropriate for the age level of your students.* Do not use flannelgraph with young people, as you will insult their intelligence. Also, do not try debate with primary children as they are not able to comprehend the needed logic.

3. *Choose a method that is best suited to your classroom and class size.* If there are four or five other classes in your room you will have difficulty dividing into small buzz groups or showing a film. Also, you may have difficulty in doing a psycho drama. Perhaps you will have to stick to lecture, question and answer, and some of the other more quiet methods. If you have a large group, then small buzz groups will enhance student interaction.

4. *Choose a method within your budget.* If your Sunday school is on a small budget, you may have to limit yourself and not use films or an overhead projector.

5. *Choose a method with variety in mind.* Lecture is an excellent way of communicating God's truth, but when used every Sunday it is overused. Variety is the spice of life, especially in Sunday school classes.

6. *Choose a method that involves your pupils.* Learning is not taking in facts but involvement with facts. Therefore, choose a method that will cause your pupils to interact with content, interact with other students and interact with you as the teacher. The Sunday school is a place of mental gymnastics where students wrestle with the Word of God.

III. YARDSTICK FOR TEACHERS

Of course you will aim to be the very best teacher possible! Remember you are the key to your Sunday school class because you are the means by which The Word of God is communicated to your pupils. Check your qualifications against the following. Remember, you can improve on your weak points in you apply yourself.

1. Being Spiritually Qualified
2. Being Educationally Qualified
3. Being Diligent in Weekly Preparation
4. Having a Well-Rounded Personality

Being Spiritually Qualified

You must have a definite experience of the new birth and be assured in your own heart, through the Word of God. Being born again is simply receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. "Ye must be born again" (John 3:7; 1:12, 13).

Also, you must be a sincere Christian, dedicated to the Lord and devoted to the class you are teaching. You should not be "conformed to this world" but have your mind renewed so that you may prove "what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Rom. 12:2). You must be, then, a spiritually minded Christian with this assurance of salvation based on the Word of God (I John 5:11-13).

If this sounds difficult- it is. The Christian life is impossible.

But Christ in the Christian (Eph. 3:17; Gal. 2:20) gives you the strength to do all things, even teach Sunday school.

You should set aside a certain time each day for prayer and meditation, in order that you may grow spiritually. During your daily prayer time you should bring before the throne of grace each student in your class.

You must be a consistent witness in every area of life. Your thought life, conversation, and actions should always be consistent with your new status as a spiritual leader. Young people look up to their teachers as examples. Some may even (mistakenly) regard you as a hero who can do no wrong. Recognize your sin and ask for forgiveness (I John 1:9). But do not be content with imperfection. Strive for maturity, so you can say with Paul the Apostle "Be ye imitators together of me" (Phil. 3:17 R.V.).

You should be faithful to the total church program, desiring the worship of the Lord. Serve through local church activities and enjoy the fellowship of other Christians.

To glorify God should be the chief motive of the Sunday school teacher. One of the best means of accomplishing this end is to lead students to put their trust in Jesus as Savior. Leading naturally from this is the follow-up work which is the teacher's privilege and duty. You must be able to aid the new Christian in Christian growth so that he too may become mature in spiritual things.

Being Educationally Qualified

The Sunday school teacher who wishes to be successful must take advantage of TEACHER TRAINING CLASSES. Here he may learn new methods of teaching and thus will be able to make his classes more interesting and the lessons more meaningful. He may learn how to deal with the problems of the pupils and will be better able to guide them in the Christian life.

It is especially imperative that the teacher study and gain a knowledge of the characteristics of his particular age group. "The child's mind," says Patterson Dubois, "is a citadel that can be taken neither by stealth nor by storm, but there is a natural way of approach and a gate of easy entry always open to him who knows how to find it." To be able to enter the child's mind the teacher must obtain knowledge of it-so that he may ascertain the right way of approach and manner of teaching.

Reading current issues of magazines containing articles on teaching techniques and methods is a vital part of the teacher's training. These ideas should stimulate new interest and encourage the teacher to put forth renewed effort into his teaching.

No matter how long a teacher has been teaching he should always be prepared to enter enthusiastically into any Study Program, conference or workshop project the Board of Christian Education has for the improvement of efficiency and technique. Teachers must keep "up-to-date"!

You should have enough education to have a good command of the English language. This is especially important if you are teaching a youth or adult's class. Your vocabulary should be fairly extensive and enable you to express yourself clearly-if not, you find students do not understand you and those who are particularly "grammar-conscious" may even make a joke of your teaching!

Being Diligent in Weekly Preparation

In this connection we would add that no one should undertake teaching in a Sunday school if he is not prepared to give time to preparation of his lesson and to extra-curricular activities. There will be home visitation, special days that will require more than the usual time, picnics, Christmas and Easter programs when the teachers will be expected to give extra service. There will be visitation projects for new members, or "service" projects which the children want to do but need the teacher's help and advice. The teacher must be ready to take full advantage of the wonderful opportunity that is his to serve the Lord in the Sunday school.

Having a Well-Rounded Personality

One of the strongest factors in the teaching of children is the teacher's personality. The life of a teacher's lesson is his life. How true this is! Therefore be careful that your life is consistent with what you say. It is only as these two are in harmony that your teaching will be effective.

You should have a neat appearance and a pleasing personality. A Christian teacher need not be dull, dowdy, or untidy; nor should he be grouchy or ill-tempered. On the contrary, he should be Christ like. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5). If the

teacher has this likeness to Christ his life will be characterized by the fruit of the Spirit as set forth in Galatians 5:22, 23.

The Sunday school teacher should have a keen interest in teaching. Teaching ability is one of the spiritual gifts given to the church for the “edifying of the body” (Eph. 4:11). Apollos is a good example of an effective Christian teacher. He was a man who was eloquent, knew the scriptures, was fervent in spirit, taught diligently, spoke boldly and was a willing helper (Acts 18:24-27). Surely because of these qualifications he “mightily convinced the Jews” (Acts 18:28). The teacher would do well to take this man as his example, for Apollos put his all into his task and succeeded.

At times you may have a feeling of insufficiency when serving the Lord in a teaching capacity. However, rely fully upon the Lord, for he can overcome this feeling of inadequacy.

You must be regular in attendance and punctual. A tardy teacher will induce tardiness in the pupils, and irregularity on the part of the teacher will result in the same thing in his pupils. A teacher is tardy if he arrives in his classroom later than fifteen minutes before class time!

It is not sufficient for a teacher to have one or two of these qualifications mentioned. All are equally essential to success, and each teacher should strive to combine all in his personality.

IV. AIMS GIVE DIRECTION TO TEACHING

The aims of the Sunday school teacher are to be determined by the needs prevailing within the class. Teaching is meeting needs. Hence, the prime and foremost aim of the teacher should be to meet the spiritual needs of pupils with the class.

We will now attempt to reveal the aims as related to the pupils' needs under three major areas.

1. Concerning the Pupil
2. Concerning the Curriculum
3. Concerning the Teacher

Concerning the Pupil

To win every person in your class to Christ. Soul-winning is the primary purpose of the Sunday school. This objective may be realized by the clear presentation of the Gospel, saturated with much prayer, in the classroom, personal evangelism and counseling. Home visitation may give opportunities for the teacher to help the pupil in spiritual matters.

To cause every student to grow spiritually. Conversion is only a starting point in the Christian's life. He must now "grow up into" and mature in his faith if he is to continue therein and be fruitful. The learning of Bible truths, as well as instruction concerning the Christian life, daily reading of the Word and communion with God through prayer, will cause him to mature.

To help the students evangelize others. There are many in the community who are eligible for class membership. We must not be satisfied with only the present class members but must bring in others. God commands us to go and teach all nations and all people His way. The people of your community can be reached through visitation to the homes. Encourage your pupils to bring their friends and have a part in reaching souls who need a Savior.

Concerning the Curriculum

The curriculum plays an important role in our teaching ministry. The teacher should therefore aim:

To make the best use of methods and materials. In these modern times we have access to much excellence in methods and materials. You should aim to acquaint yourself with the various materials and then seek to make the best use of them. The church library, commentaries, study helps, and Christian publishing houses offer much in this area.

To teach the Bible. Your aim is to get the Bible into the student and the student into the Bible. The curriculum is centered around it and in it-the Bible is the Sunday school teacher's curriculum. God has promised that His Word will never return unto Him void and, therefore, we can go forth teaching it as efficiently as we can and know how.

Concerning the Teacher

To be an example. The teacher's words have no value if they are not backed up by a consistent Christian life. The warm heart and unwavering faith will do more teaching than that which may be said. We should remember here Colossians 3:17, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

To continually grow in his own life. Constant, study of the Bible will help the teacher to acquaint the students with it and thus cause a love for study on their part. The teacher must assimilate God's Word before he can convey it to others.

To dedicate self. The teacher must accept the teaching of his class as God's work and appointment and therefore dedicate himself wholly to it. His time, talents and prayer life should center around his work. The teaching hour should be the highlight of the week.

To have a heart of compassion and understanding. A genuine Christ-like love is only obtainable from God Himself. By prayer, God will instill a compassion for the lost and a desire to see Christians grow.

To know his students' needs. There are two aspects in the acquiring of this knowledge. Firstly, know them as individuals. Their backgrounds, attitudes, handicaps, general characteristics determine their individual needs. Visiting the homes, as mentioned before, can reveal much for the Sunday school teacher to appropriate to his preparation and presentation.

Secondly, *know them as a group.* When people are in their group they act and think differently. They want to be accepted by all. As a group they will do things that each individual would hesitate about when by himself. Carefully watch their response to one another and authority. The teacher should aim to know his students in all circumstances. Occasions like parties, church functions and group endeavors will give him opportunity to observe keenly.

V. A TEACHER IS PART OF A TEAM

When considering the Sunday school teacher and organization, let us keep in mind the words of the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, "Let all things be done decently and in order."

All who undertake Christian work are, of course, directly responsible to GOD. Nevertheless, you are working in the world with other members of that body called the Church. There are certain loyalties which you must observe in relation to the Church. The Sunday school teacher is no exception.

It is expected that teachers will make it their business to be informed regarding the constitution and principles of the Sunday school. He should be familiar with the "chart of authority." Misunderstanding and confusion are often caused when a teacher acts unilaterally, by-passing the one in authority and consulting the wrong person regarding suggestions or problems. The teacher must deal with all matters relating to the Sunday school through the proper channels, i.e., through the Superintendent of his department who will take appropriate action regarding them. The following is an example of a "chart of authority" which could be adjusted to fit a larger or smaller church.

The Local congregation as a whole
The Board of Church Elders
Board of Christian Ed.
Minister of Ch. Ed.
General Supt.
Dept. Supt.
Teacher

You should understand your appointment as Sunday school teacher. This appointment carries with it responsibilities which can only be measured in the light of eternity, and is not something to be entered into lightly. Sunday school teachers should be appointed for one year. Teachers will enter into a covenant upon their appointment and each must fully understand the nature of this covenant and be ready to carry out his duties conscientiously. Should a teacher's work prove to be unsatisfactory or his influence negative, he would probably not be asked to help in a future term. In an extreme case a teacher might be asked to retire before the end of the term for which he was appointed!

The teacher is appointed to teach a specific class in the Sunday school. But, he must always remember that he is part of an organization and that there are relationships within the Sunday school, i.e., officers and leaders in the Sunday school, which he must recognize and respect. He must maintain loyalty to the over-all plan of the Sunday school though he may enjoy certain freedom within the plan. The teacher will be expected to follow the material as outlined in the quarterly. He will assist the whole organization by keeping complete records and handing in reports on time and to the proper person. Secretaries can work only with the material that is given to them.

The teacher should find out what training classes and workers' conferences are planned for his department and make it his business to attend-regularly and punctually. He should correlate his work of following up absentees and visiting homes of pupils.

The teacher should be careful to go through the proper channels in regard to materials and supplies needed for his class. This will involve filling out and submitting to the General

Secretary for approval requisition forms as provided. Under no circumstances should the teacher “bill” the Sunday school for materials purchased without consent of the authorities! Neither is it wise for the teacher to buy and pay for supplies without consulting the authorities. He may be buying things that are already stocked in abundance in the Sunday school office. The secretary should be able to give details of supplies on hand. The Sunday school leaders should know what material is being used in the school.

Inter-staff co-operation is most important and a vital thing in the efficiently run Sunday school. The teacher should take advantage of opportunities to get to know the other members of the staff. Here he can appreciate their problems and the contribution they are making to the whole. The Librarian can help the teacher find the needed books, and the teacher can assist the Librarian by asking the children to be prompt in returning borrowed books and by encouraging them to care for books they take home. Such co-operation leads to more efficient work and produces a happy atmosphere which is glorifying to God.

Sunday schools improve only as they act upon recommendations made by those who have discovered weak points. The teacher, as the one closest to the pupils, is in the best position to discover new needs and to see whether methods and materials are adequate. The teacher should earnestly seek to improve his own work and that of the Sunday school as a whole. He should bring his findings to the attention of the Workers’ Conference and be willing to discuss them for all around improvement in the Sunday school.

Co-operation with the organizational pattern in a particular group enables the teacher in the Sunday school to do his work efficiently in an atmosphere of happy fellowship. Also, good organization within the class will enable the teacher to accomplish more in teaching.

Good organization in the class will help check discipline problems by keeping everyone creatively involved. It unites the class and makes each member feel important and needed. The teacher should try to get as many pupils as possible participating in the class. Make assignments and check to see if they are being done.

If there are disciplinary problems, the teacher should look for a cause for the trouble in the surroundings and facilities of the school, such as uncomfortable chairs, poor lighting, outside noises, and report any needed changes to the Superintendent. Should disciplinary problems persist, the teacher, after prayer for and with the offender, should visit the child’s home to bring to light a reason for the difficulty. Should this fail, the teacher may have to take the child to the Superintendent and talk over his problem with him. Whatever is done, the child should never be punished in anger and should always be made to feel he is welcome and important to the Sunday School.

VI. SAMPLE LESSON PLAN

On the following page you will find a sample lesson plan that has been used by the author on a number of different circumstances. In teaching the Word of God, you might take the following lesson plan to use as a “model” to guide you in constructing your lesson plans. This plan is not suggested because it’s perfect, but only because it works for the author. Take some of the following characteristics of the lesson plan and write these into your teaching guide.

1. There is a material and pupil objective. These objectives guide the choice of materials in questions to be used in studying the lesson.

2. There are actually two introductions that can be used with this lesson. The first is a question to get the students involved. “How many miracles did Christ perform?” The second introduction (a map), involves a visual aid to guide the student’s study. Either one of the introductions helps the teacher begin “where the pupil is” and takes him to “where he should be.”

3. The content points are stated in question rather than proposition points. Too often teachers try to compose questions as they stand in front of their pupils. Therefore, before class begins, a teacher should write out questions that will cause students to explore the Word of God.

4. Note that the questions are a different variety.

III. A - This question is geographical location.

III. B - This question is a factual recall.

III. C - This is an interpretive question.

III. H - Note that this question actually has no answer, but is included to cause the student to think and interact with the Word of God.

III. J - This question is designed to cause the student to apply the Word of God to his life.

5. There is more content in this lesson than can be used in one Sunday school class. A good lesson planner will have enough material so that the teacher may choose and select that which is most adaptable for his pupils. It is not uncommon to have lesson material left over that isn’t covered in class.

6. The illustrations to be sketched on the chalkboard are drawn on the lesson planned.

Sample Lesson Plan for the Teacher

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

John 21:1-14

I. OBJECTIVE

A. Material-To analyze the spiritual state of the disciples when Christ performed His last recorded miracle on earth.

B. To show the person of Christ can meet the need of spiritual blindness and His presence challenges us to service.

II. THE APPROACH (INTRODUCTION)

- A. How many miracles did Christ perform? Have the students guess. Explain the difference between miracles and recorded miracles. Christ performed 37 recorded miracles; we don't know how many He really performed (cf. John 20:30, 31; 21:25).
- B. Use map and show the background.
The Disciples were in Jerusalem in the upper room at end of chapter 20:19, 26. Why did they leave Jerusalem and walk to Galilee? Matthew 28:10, Mark 16:7. How many miles to Galilee from Jerusalem?

III. LESSON DEVELOPMENT

- A. Where is the Sea of Tiberias? John 6:1
- B. Name all the disciples in vs. 2.
(Peter, Thomas (twin), Nathanael, James, John, Andrew and Philip) John 1:40, 43, 44.
- C. Why did Peter say, "I go afishing?" (Note the 4 possible answers.)
 - 1. Peter was the ring leader.
 - 2. He was expressing the will of the group.
 - 3. This was a manifestation of backsliding.
 - a. They were called from their nets to follow Jesus and here they are returning. Mark 1:7.
 - b. Backsliding evidenced by nothing in their nets.
 - 4. This was a natural thing to do (go fishing).
 - a. They had been living off the food supplied by Jesus (by miracles, John 6:1-14; by purchase, John 4:8).
 - b. It was only natural to help out with food. "We don't go to a relative's house and eat without helping."
- D. What is the result of fishing all night and catching nothing? (hungry, tired, discouraged, sleepy, depressed)-have students list.
- E. Why didn't the disciples know it was Jesus? (List on chalkboard)
 - 1. Because they were blinded due to backsliding.
 - a. Mary didn't know it was Jesus. John 20:14-16
 - b. Cleopas and his wife didn't know it was Jesus. Luke 24:13-21
 - c. Unbelief brings blindness. II Corinthians 4:3, 4; Mark 16:11, 13, 14
 - 2. Because of natural conditions.
 - a. They were 100 yards from shore (length of foot-ball field).
 - b. Eyes dilated because of night.

- c. Maybe fog on the lake.
- d. Early morning sun reflected on the waters.

At this point, bring out the contrast that if Peter went fishing because of backsliding then the result was blindness.

List on chalk board and point out the content.

NATURAL

BACKSLIDING

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Fishing to help out family. | 1. Fishing to get away from call to the ministry. |
| 2. Caught nothing due to natural reasons | 2. Caught nothing as punishment. |
| 3. Didn't recognize Christ, natural reasons. | 3. Didn't see Christ, blind . . . |

F. Cast nets on the right side of ship. It would have been easy to disobey a stranger; however, obedience brings blessing.

G. What is faith? Faith is obedience to the Word of God in fellowship with the Son of God. This is what the disciples did (vs. 6).

H. Peter's nakedness.

Peter was not nude, but had on an inner garment. The coat he put on was a tunic or long flowing outer garment to protect from sun, wind and chilly nights.

Why did Peter put on clothes to jump into water? Most people today take off clothes when abandoning a ship. (Modesty, picture of clothes of righteousness, don't know, some thought he would walk on water.)

I. Practical application, verse 7, John was the first to know it was the Lord; Peter was the first to act. Which are you?

J. This is one miracle in the count of 37. How many miracles make up the one? (bread, fire, fish on the fire, fish in the net, net did not break, 7 not able to pull in the net, vs. 6, Peter pulls in the net in vs. 11)

K. Why did Jesus supply miracle of fish in two ways?

(fish on shore, was this not enough? fish in net, was this enough?) It is a picture of God working in us, as well as without us to do His will.

L. CONTRAST (have students offer the answer and list on the chalkboard)

BEFORE WITHOUT CHRIST

AFTER WITH CHRIST . . .

- 1. Lacked (caught nothing)
- 2. Discouraged
- 3. Hungry
- 4. Turning back
- 5. Didn't recognize Christ

- 1. Filled-153 fish
- 2. Encouraged
- 3. Filled
- 4. Wanting to go forward
- 5. Realized His presence. Vs. 12

IV. APPLICATION

The lesson of “without Me ye can do nothing”-John 15:5-is seen here. With Christ we can do all things. Philippians 4:13. The presence of Christ in our lives makes the difference.

V. PARTICIPATION AND METHODS OF TEACHING

1. Lecture
2. Question and answer
3. Discussion groups (buzz groups)
4. Map
5. Blackboard