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HOW TO TEACH SUNDAY SCHOOL



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How to Teach Sunday School

Your Step by Step Guide to Teaching Sunday School

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HowExpert Press & Shirley Janisse

Smashwords Edition

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Introduction

A Guide for the Modern Day Sunday School Teacher

Teaching Sunday School is a calling with no monetary gain. Still, teaching Sunday School can be a very rewarding experience. The task of teaching today, however, has become a humongous challenge. Not only do today's teachers teach, but they also play other roles as well. They have become both Record Keeper and Safety Administrator and assumed other added responsibilities. This has resulted in a number of teachers throwing in the towel on their high calling.

Twenty years ago, a Sunday School teacher prepared for a class of at least fifteen students. Today, most classrooms are empty. The old traditional method of teaching Sunday School no longer appeals to this new generation. Becoming "Fishers of Men," as Jesus has instructed us to do, is requiring us to put some new "bait" on the end of our line.

Today's generation of children would rather be at home playing video games instead of sitting in a Sunday School class; they require a lot of visual stimulation and interaction. Trying to instill the Word of God in the lives of those children who are in our classroom requires you, as the teacher, to use some creative and innovative methods.

Knowing how to handle certain situations and utilizing some new, yet proven, methods will make all the difference in reaching your students. This guide is intended to help you achieve your goal as the teacher. These step by step instructions will show you how to apply these methods, and the end result will be a more effective and successful Sunday School Ministry.

Chapter 1: How to Be Prepared for the Lesson You Will Be Teaching

Preparation is a key factor in teaching more effectively. Being prepared before you present your lesson to your students is essential. Teachers who are fully prepared beforehand will not only be more effective but will notice fewer disruptions in their classroom.

Prepare the lesson

Generally, the Sunday School Administrator will supply the teacher with a “Quarterly,” or a curriculum, but this is not always the case. Some Sunday School teachers are left with the responsibility of coming up with their own material based upon a theme. Regardless, the Sunday School Teacher should be able to put a lesson together that has been thoroughly researched and will capture the audience's attention when presented.

Materials You Will Need to Get Started

Quarterly or Curriculum

Bible

Notepad / Index Cards

Pen / Pencils

Highlighter

Dictionary

Timer

Large Mirror

Tape Recorder

Folder

Follow these steps when preparing your lesson:

1. Read the lesson.

Don’t just browse over the material, but study it thoroughly; I recommend you read it at least three times. This is important because you might miss valuable points if you just glance over the materials.

2. Highlight key points.

Use a highlighter to mark areas of importance in the lesson that need to be stressed. When you are ready to present the lesson to your students you will automatically know what areas on which you should expand.

3. Think like a child.

Write your presentation for its intended audience. You can arrange an excellent presentation, but if you haven’t geared it to reach the specific age group you are teaching, then you will have wasted your time and theirs.

4. Make a list of questions.

Think of some questions concerning the lesson that children might ask you. Write down the questions and answers on index cards (this will save you the time of looking up the answers later).

5. Write down personal experiences.

Think of some personal experiences that you have had that relate to the lesson, write them down, and be ready to share. Children can relate to the subject more easily when they have an example. Bible stories are great, but they happened so long ago that the story appears distant to the child.

6. Rehearse the Presentation.

Once you have composed the lesson as a presentation, rehearse it. Stand in front of a full length mirror and rehearse the lesson. Listen for sentences that might not sound right to the listener's ears or that you falter over when speaking. Stumbling through a presentation will cause the listener to lose focus.

7. Record the lesson.

As you rehearse it, record the lesson on a tape recorder. This will give you an idea of how the presentation will sound to your audience. Play it back and see if there are areas that need improvement. Listen to your voice's tone; is the voice you are using going to capture your audience's attention or put them to sleep?

8. Time the Presentation.

Once you have rehearsed the presentation and are comfortable with it, then go through it one more time and, using a timer, time the presentation. Knowing the amount of time the presentation will take will help you with planning and scheduling the rest of your activities.

9. Store the Presentation.

Place the lesson, the question and answer cards, and notes all into one folder. Having all this information together in the order you wish to present it will make the task of teaching the lesson so much easier.

10. Put the Presentation in a Safe Place.

If at all possible, I recommend that you take the finished presentation to the church prior to Sunday morning. Keep it in a filing cabinet or somewhere it will be safe. Losing a presentation, or forgetting it at home, will require you to come up with something at the last minute for which you haven't prepared in advance.

11. Prepare your craft ahead of time

Having everything prepared for your craft ahead of time will ensure that each child has everything they need to complete their craft. Craft time can be an extremely busy time; children usually require a lot of assistance from the teacher. When the teacher spends a lot of time passing out materials that are needed to assemble the craft, this takes time away from assisting

children who require help. An unfinished craft will easily discourage a child.

Have These Items Ready to Prepare Your Craft:

All materials pertaining to the craft

Zip lock bags or brown lunch bags

Stapler

Scissors

Timer

Carrying container such as a box or large bag

Follow these step by step instructions on how to prepare the craft:

Put all pieces of the craft in individual piles. For example: Popsicle sticks in one pile, cut outs in another pile, pipe cleaners in another pile, and so on.

One bag at a time, place one piece of each item into the bag until the bag has every component needed to assemble the craft.

Staple or zip lock the bags.

Place finished bags in a container.

Assemble the craft yourself.

Time how long it takes to assemble the craft.

Having an assembled craft will allow the child to see how the craft should look when it is finished. It will also help you to understand how easy or difficult the craft will be for the child. Timing yourself will give you an idea of how much time needs to be allotted, and it will help you to plan that time accordingly.

Prepare your Activities

Activities can include anything from performing a skit to playing a game or a sport, or having a Bible verse contest. Whatever you decide to do, you should choose an activity that allows the child some form of movement. Children become restless and bored easily, and restless or bored children will allow their mind to wander and will not pay attention to what is being taught.

An activity that correlates with the lesson is recommended. I have compiled a list of some suggested activities and how to prepare for them.

Charades

What you will need:

The lesson

Index cards

Fine point marker

Hat or basket

Timer

Begin by finding characters, animals, or objects that were mentioned in the lesson.

Use a fine point marker to write down one character on an index card.

Use a fine point marker to write down one animal on an index card.

Use a fine point marker to write down one object on an index card.

Repeat steps 2 to 4 until you have prepared enough cards. Always make a few extras.

Fold cards in half.

Place cards in a hat or basket.

Store cards in the classroom (in the hat or basket) where they are easily accessible.

How to play:

Make a quick list of the children who are playing.

Instruct the children not to share what their card says with the other children.

Have each child draw out a card from the hat/basket.

One at a time, have the children act out what is written on their cards.

5. Allot a specific amount of time for each child to act out the charade.

6. When a child has guessed the charade, correctly, place a check mark next to their name.

7. When everyone has had turn acting, check the list to see if anyone has guessed more charades correctly.

8. Award the winner with a prize. Have smaller prizes available for the rest of the class.

Soccer

What you will need:

The Bible verse that correlates with the lesson

Soccer ball

Weather report (before planning, make sure the weather will be ideal for this activity)

How to play:

Have the children review the Bible verse several times by saying it aloud.

Tell the children where the verse is found in the Bible.

Divide the class into two teams

Flip a coin to decide which team goes first

Instruct the children that they must yell out where the verse can be found (example: John 3:16) when they kick the ball through the goal. Failure to do so will disqualify the goal points.

Keep score.

Award prizes.

Nature Hike

What you will need:

Pencils & paper

Brown paper lunch bags

Weather report (before planning your hike, make sure the weather will be ideal for this activity)

Poster board

Glue

Timer or watch to keep time

Follow these step by step instructions:

Explore ahead of time an area close to your church suitable for your nature hike.

Divide the class into four teams.

Pick someone from each team to record the objects they will find.

Give that team member a sheet of paper and a pencil.

Give each child a brown lunch bag.

Show the children the designated area you have chosen and the perimeters within which they should stay.

Have the children gather items pertaining to nature.

Have the team member make a list of items on the piece of paper.

Allot a certain amount of time for collecting materials.

Return to classroom.

Have each team arrange their findings on a poster board.

Have the teams glue their findings to the poster board.

Write the Bible verse that pertains to the lesson on the poster board.

14. Have each child sign their name on the poster board.

15. When dry, display the finished posters on the wall.

Taking the children on a small nature hike will not only be fun for the children, but it will help to teach them about Creation. If your church is situated in the city, split the children into two groups and have them create a list of God's creations that are within view.

Skits or Puppets

You can find skits on the Internet that will correlate with your lesson. Children enjoy acting. They also love to perform using puppets. Creating a small stage on which they can perform is fairly easy and can be done without spending a great amount of money.

If your classroom is big enough that you can designate a certain area just for performances, then build a stage that doesn't require disassembling. If you don't have an area in your room that can be designated for this purpose, then you will need to build something that can be taken apart and stored until needed again.

You can purchase a puppet stage that can be disassembled for around $200.00. Building your own will cost you approximately $50.00, depending on where you purchase the materials. If construction isn't your forte, then enlist someone in the church who is skilled in the area of construction to build it for you.

Building a Stage that can be disassembled can be done fairly easily if you follow these directions:

What you will need:

¼ inch plywood (4 square feet so that you can cut 4 squares that are 1 foot each)

5 pieces of 2" PVC pipe

You will need 4 of each of the following:

2” PVC couplers (pipe to pipe)

2” PVC 90 degree elbows

2” PVC T connectors

Flat bottom end caps that will slip inside the 2” couplers

Carriage bolts complete with flat & lock washers and nuts

PVC cleaner

PVC glue

220 grit sandpaper

You will also need these tools on hand before you begin:

Circular saw

Electric drill

Sander

Drill press

Deep well socket, same size as the nuts you purchased

This puppet stage is intended for a 6 foot area. Since most classrooms do not have this space available in which to leave the stage intact, I recommend that you build this stage because it can, then, be disassembled. It is easy to transport and reasonably priced. Be sure to follow the directions precisely to ensure that you have glued the correct joints. Some joints are intended to be left as friction joints; so paying attention to the directions is of utmost importance!

Construction Directions:

Begin by cutting out four 1foot squares of plywood for the feet.

Sand down any rough areas with 220 grit sandpaper to avoid the possibility of splinters.

Drill a hole in the center of each 1 foot square.

Using an electric drill or drill press, drill a hole in the center of each of the PVC end caps.

Using a spade drill bit, countersink the bottom of the plywood feet so that the carriage bolts will be flush with the bottom of the foot.

Beginning at the bottom of the plywood feet, insert the carriage bolts as follows: carriage bolts through the bottom of the feet and through the PVC end caps. Place the flat washer on the end of the bolt and insert the lock washer on top, and then insert the nut.

Tighten the nut with the socket and ratchet, being careful not to destroy the PVC pipe.

Dry fit your PVC end caps and couplers to ensure that they will fit together. You want to ensure that you can insert the PVC leg at least 1 inch inside the coupler to hold the leg securely.

Use a scrap piece of wood, approximately ¾ inch in size, between the plywood foot and the coupler as a spacer when gluing.

Glue the PVC end caps to the PVC couplers using the PVC cleaner first and then the glue.

Allow the glue to dry for at least 30 minutes.

Information on gluing PVC pipe:

Dry fit all PVC pieces first. Make a mark to show where you will be gluing the PVC pipe.

Sand down any rough edges after you cut the pipe.

Use the cleaner and make sure the area you are gluing is free from any debris that might cause the pipe to not glue securely.

Allow the cleaner to dry before applying glue.

Push the pieces together and turn the pipes at least ¼ of an inch to distribute the glue more evenly.

Use generous amounts of glue on the PVC pipes and apply a thin layer of glue to the socket.

Be careful not to get the glue on your skin.

Work in an area that is well ventilated.

Once you have applied glue, you have approximately 10 seconds to move the PVC pipe before the glue sets up and the pipe cannot be moved.

Take the time to create joints that will hold securely during the disassembling of the stage.

Using a permanent marker, mark the joints that have been glued. This will help you to remember which parts should not be tugged on when trying to disassemble the stage.

Now that you have prepared the legs and feet and have glued the necessary joints it is time to cut the five 2” pipes into their required lengths. You will need to cut two of each of the following lengths:

13 ½ inch length for the top of the backdrop

55 ½ inch length for the bottom of the backdrop

96 inch length for the width of the stage

70 inch length for upright assemblies

36 inch length for the depth of the stage

50 inch length for the front drop height

3 inch length for scraps

How to put together the front joint components:

Gather together two 50 inch lengths, along with two 90 degree elbows, and two T connectors. Use your 3 inch lengths to connect the 90 degree elbow to the T connector. You will need to assemble two of these; one for the right front and one for the left front.

Dry fit the front joint components first, and then check to ensure that everything looks all right.

Now glue THESE parts:

The bottom of the T connector from the previous step to the 50 inch front leg pipe

The T connector to 3 inch scrap

The 3 inch scraps to the 90 degree elbow

Do NOT glue the 96 inch crossbar or the 36 inch depth bar if you intend on being able to disassemble this stage!

How to put together the rear joint components:

Gather together two T connectors, one 55 ½ inch length pipe, and one 13 ½ inch length pipe.

Dry fit the components together.

Glue the 55 ½ inch length to the bottom of the T connector

Glue the 13 ½ inch length pipe to the top of the T connector

Dry fit first and then glue the two 90 degree elbows to the 96 inch crossbar.

Allow all components to dry for 30 minutes.

Assembling the Puppet Stage:

1. Lay out two of your assembled feet, approximately 6 feet apart.

2. Insert a 70 inch length pipe into each rear upright assembly.

3. Place the rear cross bar into the top of each of the rear upright assemblies.

4. Place each of the 36 inch front upright assemblies into two of the feet.

5. Insert the front crossbar between the two front upright assemblies.

6. Using two 36 inch depth pipes, connect the back half to the front half.

Your puppet stage is almost complete. You will need to cover the backdrop and the front drop with some type of material. My suggestion would be to purchase dark cloth, either blue or black in color. Check out your local Goodwill or second hand store and see if you can purchase some used curtains. You may have to cut them down to size and do a little sewing to make them fit. You can also use flat bed sheets that are darkly colored.

Remember that they should look like curtains when you put them on, so buy enough material that will cover the area without having to be stretched. You will need to alter the backs so that the pipes will slide through them; this can be done by adding a 6 inch strip of material across the back.

How to adjust the material to fit:

Turn the material so that you are working on the backside.

Using another form of material, cut a piece that is the width of your curtain or sheet.

Finish cutting the material so that it is 6 inches in depth.

Iron a ½ inch hem base on both the top and the bottom of your strip of material.

Pin the hem base 3 inches from the top of the curtain or sheet with the ironed edge turned down.

Sew the hem in place.

Pin the bottom edge of the strip just like Step 5.

Sew the hem in place. When finished, there should be two openings on each end of your curtain.

Now, slide the top bar out of the elbow and slide the bar through the strip that you made, making sure that the front side of the curtain is facing towards the audience's view.

Do the same for your lower front bar.

You can also attach Velcro to the bars and to your material if it would be easier for you. However, Velcro will not give you that curtain look.

Making Your Own Sock Puppets

What You Will Need:

Scissors

Socks (at least 3 pairs)

Colorful buttons or glue on eyes

Yarn (brown, black, red, or yellow)

Red felt pieces

Pompoms

Hot glue gun & glue sticks

Draw your characters on paper first.

Decide where to place the eyes. Glue them on, or sew them on if using buttons.

Glue on a pompom for a nose.

Cut out a mouth using red felt, and then glue it onto the sock.

Cut strips of yarn, at least 10 inches long.

Put 6 strands together and sew the strands onto the sock above the eyes. Loop your thread around the middle of the yarn, tacking the 6 strands together.

Repeat Step 6 until you have enough strands to make your puppet look like it has hair.

Place the sock on your hand and decide where the neck of the character will be.

Glue felt pieces on to make your puppet appear as if it has clothes on.

Making puppets is both simple and fun. You could even have your class help you. There are many websites that offer ideas for making puppets. Take the time to do your own research.

Preparing a Snack

Having a snack that is already prepared is definitely a great idea. Treats, such as Goldfish or cheese sticks, give the children nourishment. Most children are rushed to Sunday school unfed. A hungry child will be less likely to pay attention to the lesson. Preparing your snack ahead of time will save you the time it takes to dole out snacks in the classroom. It will also make the snacks seem more personal to the children.

What you need:

Snack sized zip lock bags

Cutting board and knife if preparing vegetables

Rubber gloves

Measuring cup

Preparing snacks such as crackers, snack mixes, or dried fruits:

Put on rubber gloves

Measure out an appropriate amount

Place amount in zip lock bags

Close bags tightly, removing air as you close them.

Snacks, such as crackers, snack mixes, or dried fruits, can correlate with the lesson. Use Goldfish for lessons such as: The Four Fishermen who became disciples in the 4th chapter of Matthew, and The Feeding of The Five Thousand in the 6th chapter of Mark.

Use snack mixes that have Wheat Chex cereals in them for lessons on The Parable of The Wheat and The Tares in the 13th chapter of Matthew, or the Parable of The Sower, which is also found in the 13th chapter of Matthew.

Dried fruit mixes can be used for lessons that teach about the fruit of the Spirit, or are related to fruit in some form. Always stay away from using sugar coated snack items; you never know when you may have a child who has a condition, like diabetes, of which you are unaware.

Preparing Vegetable snacks:

Put on rubber gloves.

Clean or peel vegetables.

Wash Vegetables and drain.

Cut into appropriate bite sizes.

Place an appropriate amount in each bag.

Close bags tightly, removing air as you close them.

Vegetable snacks can be used to represent many things and can correlate with a lesson about Cain and Abel. If you are a creative person, you could also arrange a vegetable tray that would represent the Garden of Eden.

There are many creative ideas out there that a Sunday School teacher can utilize so that she can correlate the snack with the lesson. Here is one of my favorites, which can be used when teaching a lesson about the Walls of Jericho.

How to Build The Walls of Jericho

What You Will Need:

Box of graham crackers

1 8oz. package of softened cream cheese

Bag of pretzel sticks (long sticks are best)

Tray covered with aluminum foil

Thin red licorice

Using the cream cheese, draw a square the size of your Jericho on the tray. Make your line thick enough that you can place the bottom edge of a cracker in it.

Unwrap the graham crackers.

Coat the edge of the long side of the graham cracker with cream cheese.

Stick the cracker down onto the line of cream cheese that you drew on the tray.

Use another cracker and coat the edge with cream cheese.

Place that cracker next to the other cracker and bump them up against each other.

Continue Steps 5 & 6 until you have made a square that represents the city of Jericho.

Use the long stick Pretzels on the corners of the city, and to make a gate in the front.

Using cream cheese, attach them to the city.

10. Apply thin strips of licorice to the front of the gate so it looks more like a gate.

Refrigerate the completed city overnight in order for it to paste itself together. When it is snack time, have the children march around the table seven times and then give a great shout! They can then disassemble the pieces of the city and eat them for their snack.

Great snack ideas are only a click away. Browse the Internet for some great ideas, or be creative and come up with a few of your own.

Planning a schedule

Planning a schedule in advance will ensure that you have enough materials and activities to cover the time that you have been given. Scheduling these activities will allow you to keep things running more smoothly in the classroom. There are many more components to the Sunday School lesson than just the lesson itself. Activities, along with arts and crafts, help to make the lesson more valuable to the student. Running out of time to finish a project is discouraging to a child.

What You Will Need:

The amount of time it took when you practiced presenting your lesson

The amount of time it took you to assemble the craft

An idea of how long a skit or activity will take

A spreadsheet designed for scheduling purposes (you can generally find these in your Microsoft Works program)

Pencil for filling in the spreadsheet

Follow these guidelines when creating your schedule:

Know the approximate amount of time that you will have the children in your classroom.

Prepare enough material and activities to cover that time frame.

Prepare additional activities in case the time is extended.

Never leave yourself in the predicament of having to come up with an activity at the last minute; it gives the children a sense that you are not in control of the situation.

Mix it up and don't follow the same order week after week.

Opt for a Christian video instead of teaching the lesson yourself.

Instead of a craft, you could have the children perform a skit. Whatever you choose to do, you should always make sure that you have covered the time adequately.

Go into your classroom 10 minutes before classes begin.

Make sure the room is clean.

Check to see that the chalk and markers are reachable.

Make sure that everything you will need for the lesson is ready and that nothing is missing.

Then pray. Pray that the children will be receptive to the lesson. Pray for God to give you the right words and the right answers. Pray against any disruptions. Pray for the lesson to run smoothly. Prayer is of the utmost importance!

I found this table available to me on my Microsoft Works Word Processor. There were several to choose from. Let me show you how to find one and then create one.

Open up your Microsoft Works Word Processor.

Left click with your mouse on the heading: Table.

Left click on: Insert Table.

Now choose a format from the options given in the left hand corner.

In the right hand corner you will choose how many rows and columns you will need.

Now, choose OK, and the table you have created will appear on your word processor.

Now, place any information you need into the columns (I chose to make a heading for “Time” instead of typing specific times into the chart. This way I can pencil them in, allowing me to change the schedule on a weekly basis).

Once you have finished the chart, copy and paste another one below it.

You should be able to place two charts on a page. Make sure you save them as a document so you will have them to print when needed. Once you print some, cut the paper in half so you will have two charts.

Here is an example of what your Sunday School Planner might look like:

Sunday School Planner… Today’s Date:

Time:…Event:…Person Leading Event:

Plan a schedule according to what you want to do and when you want it to happen. Your schedule might look something like this:

10:00 to 10:05 Opening prayer & Pledge of Allegiance

10:05 to10:25 Read the lesson

10:25 to 10:30 Question & answer time

10:30 to 10:45 Snack time

10:45 11:15 Craft

11:15 to 11:45 Activity

11:45 to 12:00 Fellowship, cleanup, & closing Prayer

Once you have a schedule formatted, pencil it in on the schedule chart that you created. Place your finished schedule in the container along with the other items you have prepared for your lesson.

Preparation is only one key element in teaching Sunday School. The teacher who is fully prepared will find that her classroom will run more smoothly. She will find that she has fewer disruptions from her students. She will have more opportunities to be available to meet the needs of her students. She will feel more confident in teaching.

Chapter 2: How to Create a Classroom That Is Inviting

This is one area to which we don't give much thought. You will be surprised at the difference in the way the children react in your classroom once you have made these changes. As adults, we spend countless hours making our homes inviting so that our guests will feel comfortable when they visit.

The Sunday School room should make the child feel at home as well. Creating the right atmosphere in which children can be comfortable will enhance the overall Sunday School experience. I have listed the changes that our Church made in order to achieve an atmosphere that the children enjoyed.

We saw immediate changes in our Sunday School attendance because the children were proud of their accomplishments. They began inviting other children to Sunday School just to see what they had done. Talk about “new bait”; these changes reeled them in!

Remove all tables and chairs except those that will be used to assemble crafts.

Use fold up table and chairs for craft time unless your room has enough space to keep tables and chairs intact.

Replace chairs with colorful beanbag pillows.

Make your own. Here are instructions on how to make your own:

Purchase sturdy flannel or felt material.

Cut material into 24 inch squares.

Placing two squares together with front sides facing each other, sew three sides of the square together using a ½ inch seam.

Fill sewed squares with packing peanuts (if you check around, you can get these free).

Finish sewing the 4th side together.

Use colorful carpet squares or remnants and create a patterned design.

Before you can lay down colorful carpet squares, you will need an idea of how much floor space needs to be covered. You will need to measure the floor space you intend to cover. This can be achieved by following these instructions on how to measure a floor:

Begin by drawing a floor plan of the room you will be measuring.

Measure the width of the room.

Measure the length of the room. To get the measurement of the total floor area that you intend to cover, multiply the length by the width. Write this measurement down on your drawing. Do not include recess areas.

Calculate any areas of recess. These are areas that are a part of the room but may be on the side. Measure the width and length of the area.

Add the 1st measurement to the recess measurement. This will give you an idea of how much floor space you will be covering when you purchase materials.

Once you have your measurements, you can continue creating a pattern by following these steps:

Draw up a blueprint of how you want your design to look.

Using colored chalk, draw your design on the bare floor.

Measure each component to the design and then scale it so that the whole design will cover the floor.

Cut your design pieces using the figured measurements.

Lay each design piece on the floor in the area in which you intend it to be placed.

Use a self adhesive glue and glue each piece in its proper place.

Prep the Walls

Before you decorate the walls, you need to paint them. Before you can paint them, you will need to prep them. Here are step by step instructions on prepping your walls:

1. Clean the walls. Use a mild dish detergent and a sponge to remove items such as dirt, dust, and grease spots. This will ensure that your walls will have a smooth finish when the painting is completed.

2. Sand down rough areas. Use a pole sander with 120 grit sandpaper. Starting at the top of the wall, applying medium pressure, move the sander back and forth until you reach the bottom of the wall. Be careful not to

gouge the wall. Wear a dust mask for protection. Change the sandpaper often.

3. Remove all electrical plates. Remove the electrical plate covers and tape the screws to the plate for safekeeping. Cover the switches and outlets with painter's tape.

4. Fill in all gaps and holes. You should fill in drywall holes with drywall plaster at least three days prior to painting, allow them to dry completely, and then sand them down. Also, fill in baseboards and around window trim with caulking.

5. Tape the windows, door frames and trim. Apply blue tape (painter's tape) to the window frames, door frames, and any trim.

6. Prime the walls. Priming your walls will enable your paint to adhere better, be more uniform in appearance, and will make your paint stretch farther. Prime walls that have already been painted before. This will keep the old paint from bleeding through your new painted walls.

Paint the Walls

Painting your walls is a project that can become an enjoyable activity for any age. Begin by following these basic steps:

Cover all floors and furniture with painter’s tarps.

Paint ceiling first.

Trim areas with a brush that your roller won’t reach. Difficult areas such as corners, around windows, around trimming, and doors should be painted with an angled brush, extending the paint at least two inches from the area.

Paint top and bottom edges of the wall. Use a 2 inch angled brush and trim along the top and bottom edges of the walls.

Dampen the roller. Before you begin using the roller for the first time, dip it in water for latex paint or paint thinner for oils.

Distribute the paint evenly on the roller. Pour just enough paint into the roller pan to cover bottom of pan. Roll it back and forth over the grate until paint is distributed evenly on roller.

Roll out the paint. Using an M or a W pattern, roll the paint onto a section of the wall. Use vertical strokes to distribute paint between the lines.

Allow paint to dry. Wait a couple hours before applying a second coat of paint.

Allow the children to paint murals or place their hand prints on the walls.

Purchase acrylic paints of various colors.

Have each child draw on paper the mural that they intend to display.

Check their murals to see that they are appropriate and that they will display a Christian message.

Have each child choose an area in which their mural will be displayed.

Have the children paint their murals on the walls.

Be creative. Choose a theme. Pick a date and a time when the children can come and do the painting themselves. Make it a painting party!

Decorate the ceiling.

Have the children make mobiles to hang from the ceiling.

Using tacks, tack the mobiles to the ceiling.

Make clouds using cotton balls or batting.

Purchase glow in the dark stars.

Supply your room with modern technology.

Purchase a television.

Purchase a DVD player.

Purchase a computer.

Purchase DVDs that have been produced by Christian artists.

Veggie Tales are great for 3 to 7 year olds.

Most religions have moved away from the theory that these items are tools of the devil. If these tools are used correctly in the classroom, they will become effective in reaching your students.

Create an area where craft items and supplies can be stored.

Purchase bookshelves.

Purchase totes.

Sort items into categories.

Label the totes according to what items will be stored in them.

Have the children organize the area and label the items themselves.

Paint one wall a darker color than the others.

Use this wall for the chalkboard and for displaying charts.

Put a birthday chart up on the wall and recognize children on their birthday.

Use colored chalks for the chalkboard.

If you are using a dry eraser board, then have an assortment of various colored markers available.

Don’t settle for a plain chalkboard or dry eraser board. Have the children design the edges of them.

These methods were also applied to our teen room. Each teen chose an 8x4 foot section of a wall and painted individual murals to express their faith. These walls were displayed with murals that depicted the fish emblem, footprints (for which they actually dipped their feet in paint), graffiti that read “REVIVE” since that is the name of the teen group, and so many other creative murals. This was all done during our Teen Lock In.

Chapter 3: How to Choose the Right Crafts for Your Lesson

Here are a few pointers that will help when deciding what crafts to choose:

Know what the lesson is about and what point you are intending to get across to the student.

For example, if your lesson is about creation, then you could have the children create objects using clay. You could also have paint available, along with a blank canvas, and instruct them to paint each of the creations as you are teaching them.

Don’t use a craft to be time filler.

It is essential that you choose your craft so that the child will gain some understanding of the lesson. Often times, Sunday School teachers choose a craft that doesn’t correlate with the lesson. The child will then go home with the craft in hand, and a parent might ask the child what he or she learned that day. Chances are they will not remember what the lesson was about when they look at the craft they have put together.

Make sure the craft is geared towards the age group that you are teaching.

Think about your children and know what they are capable of doing. If you are teaching 3 to 5 year olds, then keep it as simple as possible. Some crafts for 5 to10 year olds can be very tedious and require help from an adult. Be sure that you have enlisted the help of other adults during craft time. Objects that need excessive gluing, such as building an ark out of Popsicle sticks, will require additional time and should be compensated for.

Make sure that the craft you have chosen can be finished in the time that you have allotted. Children get discouraged when they have an unfinished project. I have found it to be extremely helpful if I have an example of what the finished product should look like. Putting the craft together yourself will give you a much better idea of the time it will take to make the craft and how easy or difficult it will be for the child. Time yourself, and then allow an additional amount of time for the child.

Be sensitive to the fact that not all children enjoy putting crafts together.

Have ready and available puzzles or coloring pages that correlate with the lesson for those children who don’t enjoy crafts. Never push a child to join the other children in building crafts. You can gently coax them into trying, but pushing a child into doing something that they feel inadequate at only puts the child in an uncomfortable situation.

Finding unique and fun crafts for the student that is geared to their specific age group requires research on the teacher's part. Take a look at some of the great places where I have found ideas and crafts:

Search the Internet.

There is an endless amount of resources available to you.

Note: This is a relatively short list compared to what is available to you as a Sunday School teacher. Searching the Internet for Sunday School crafts will require some time and effort on your part.

Here is how you begin your search on the Internet:

Left click on the Internet icon.

Once the Internet comes into view, go to the right hand corner of your screen.

Type keywords into the search engine, such as: “bible crafts,” “children ministries,” or “Sunday School.”

The search engine will then display a variety of websites.

Scroll down the listing until you find what you are looking for.

Once you have arrived on the website, look for the heading “Arts & Crafts.”

Left click on the heading. You should now be viewing a page that will offer you ideas or instructions.

There are thousands of sites available that can help you generate craft ideas for your lesson. Most sites even post crafts geared towards a specific age group.

Your nearest Bible book store offers crafts for sale at reasonable prices.

Your nearest Bible bookstore should be stocked with crafts, complete with instructions. Most of these crafts come with lesson plans. Generally, everything you need to put the craft together will come in one complete package. This is great because you won’t have to purchase any additional supplies.

There are creative people in your church who can help.

We tend to forget that there are people in our church who are artistic and creative. You should seek them out and ask them for suggestions. If you feel that you are not a creative person, then I would suggest that you enlist someone who is and have them instruct during craft time. Craft time should be pleasurable. The right instructor can make a huge difference in a child's overall experience.

Check out your local craft store.

There are wonderful crafts that you can purchase at your local craft store. If you have a craft idea already in mind, you will be able to purchase the supplies you need right there. Since the people who are employed there are knowledgeable in this field, they will be able to generate some creative ideas for you.

Stocking your classroom so you will have the basic supplies on hand

A good teacher will stock her classroom with an assortment of supplies to ensure that her students are getting the most out of their arts & craft time. Below is a list of supplies that every classroom should have on hand:

Construction paper

Poster board

Washable markers

Glue: 1 per every two students

Child safety scissors

Staplers

Tape

Foam craft pieces

Felt pieces

Popsicle sticks

Pipe cleaners in a variety of colors

Clay

Stickers

Getting the most out of your arts & craft Budget

The arts & craft ministry will, no doubt, stretch your budget to the limit. You should do everything possible to make your budget stretch. Purchasing items that are on sale will help to make your budget go further. Here are a few other tips that will aide you in saving money on your craft items.

Ask for items to be donated by members of the church.

There are members in your church who have a desire to support the children's ministry, yet feel they have no talent or anything special to offer. Allowing them to donate money or purchase a few items will help them to feel as if they are helping in some way.

Check with your local craft store to see if your church is eligible for any discounts.

Depending on how much you are purchasing, and how often, some local craft stores offer churches discounts on their purchases. You may need a few things to qualify, such as a tax ID number or a letterhead that displays your church logo for identification purposes.

Ask a local restaurant if they would be willing to donate items such as paper plates, paper cups, or spoons.

When asked, I have found that most restaurants will donate these items as long as it isn't a huge quantity. Don't make a habit of asking the same restaurant to donate over and over again.

Ask your local fabric store if they have scrap materials that they would be willing to donate.

Although most fabric stores cut materials at the customers' request, sometimes they have scraps that cannot be sold to the public. If you tell them what you want the scraps for, they may even save damaged material for you.

Keep an eye out at garage sales for beads or other useful materials.

Some of my greatest finds have come from garage sales. Beads, craft paints, buttons, and scrap materials are just a few of the treasures I have found. I have also found items such as wood, unpainted pottery, and dowel rods.

Local newspaper business

Our local newspaper business saves us the end rolls of their reams of newsprint. This has come in handy for projects where we can use them instead of poster boards.

See if local businesses would be willing to sponsor your arts & crafts ministry.

You will be surprised at how much your community is willing to support you. Businesses in the community take pride in knowing they play a vital part in helping shape the lives of the future generation. Studies have shown that children who attend a Sunday School program are less likely to become troubled adolescents.

Here are some craft ideas and instructions on how to make them:

A Book about Creation

What you will need:

Washable paint or markers

Scraps of felt

Stickers of birds and fish

Stickers of animals

Cutouts from magazines of men and women

Yarn

Glitter (blue & green)

Cotton balls

Hole puncher

Glue

Paper plates

Give each child 8 paper plates.

On the 1st plate, have each child write “God's Creation.”

Have each child paint the 2nd paper plate black (represents darkness).

Have the children set the 2nd plate aside to dry.

Have each child paint the 3rd paper plate blue (represents the sky).

Have the children set the 3rd plate aside to dry.

On the 4th plate, have them cut and glue on felt pieces shaped like the sun, the moon, and stars.

8. On the 5th plate, have the children glue blue glitter for the rivers, and green glitter for the land.

9. Give each child 5 cotton balls and have them stretch them.

10. Have each child return to the 2nd plate and place a large dab of white to represent light.

11. Have each child return to the 3rd plate and glue stretched cotton balls to represent clouds.

12. On the 6th plate, have each child place stickers of fish and birds.

13. On the 7th plate, have each child place stickers of animals.

14. Have them glue on a man and woman from the magazine cutouts on the 7th plate as well.

15. On the 8th plate, have them write “God Rested”.

16. Have the children put the plates in order of the Creation story.

17. Have an adult punch a hole through all the plates on the side so as to make a book.

18. Loop a piece of yarn through the hole to hold the pages (plates) together.

Warrior T Shirts

What you will need:

One T shirt per child in their size (this activity requires some pre planning. Find out sizes a couple weeks ahead if at all possible. Have extras on hand for visitors. Purchase the extras in Large).

Several bottles of fabric paint in brown, green, and tan

Fabric glue

Army patches (you can purchase these at your local Army Navy store)

Hangers (preferably plastic)

Write each child's name on the tag or inside the shirt.

Using fabric paint, have each child paint their T shirt to appear camouflaged.

Have each child write “I’m In The Lord’s Army” somewhere on their shirt.

Have each child decide where they will place their patch.

Have an adult glue patches on.

Hang T shirts on hangers and hang to dry.

Chapter 4: How To Make The Lesson More Enjoyable

Having a well planned lesson is essential. Knowing how to present the lesson so that it is enjoyable and captures the child's attention takes some creativity on your part. Here are a few suggestions along with steps on how to achieve your goal.

Become part of the lesson.

Choose a character in the lesson and play the part.

Dress up in costume.

Give the character a voice.

Present the lesson from the characters point of view.

Utilize puppets. Children and adults love puppet shows.

Enlist the help from a few church members and turn the lesson into a puppet show.

7. Study the lesson and turn it into a song that you can teach them (children love to sing. Composing a song that they will remember and sing often is very rewarding).

Create a game that can be played in teams with the lesson.

Make copies of the lesson.

Have the children read parts of the lesson aloud.

Have questions written out that you can ask.

Divide the group into two teams.

Ask your questions during the lesson.

Give points to the team that answers first.

Give the winning team a prize.

Give a prize of lesser value to the losing team. Don’t use snacks for prizes!

Have a guest speaker deliver the lesson.

Ask someone to deliver the lesson.

Help the speaker prepare for the lesson.

Schedule a guest speaker at least once every two months (no matter how great you have become as a Sunday School teacher by using these methods, children still need to be influenced by other members of the church).

Note: Each week I dress up in a costume. One week I dressed up as a doctor. I explained that Jesus was the great Physician. The next week I came in a costume where I had on clothing that didn’t match. I was Squirrelly Shirley, and the kids loved it! I explained that Jesus loves us no matter what we look like on the outside.

You can use your imagination and come up with costumes that not only impart a valuable message that the child will remember, but that will keep them eagerly waiting to see what you will be wearing the following Sunday.

Chapter 5: Dealing With The Problem Child

Constantly dealing with a disruptive child on a weekly basis can be discouraging to even the best Sunday School teacher who is trying her best to teach. I would encourage the teacher to try some of these methods first before having to appeal to a higher authority in the church.

Begin by talking with the child's parents.

Find out if the child has some type of disorder such as ADHD or Autism. The more insight you have to the child's daily behavior, the better you will able to deal with the child.

Have the child be your special helper for the day.

Some would argue that we are rewarding bad behavior by allowing this child such special privileges. This is not the case. We are just giving him/her purpose. Most children who are disruptive are seeking attention. If we can get them focused on doing something that makes them feel wanted and useful, we will see a difference in their behavior. Here are some useful steps for approaching the child with this offer:

Take the child aside before class begins.

Ask the child to be your helper.

Inform the child that the job requires someone who can be quiet during class and who is very helpful.

Encourage the child by telling him/her that you believe they are capable of doing the job.

Allow the child to be as useful as possible.

Let the child pass out materials or gather supplies.

Thank the child for his/her help.

Keep in mind that this is your problem child; you may not see success the first time. Praise the child for even the smallest amount of achievement. Most times, the disruptive child has low self esteem and is seeking approval from others; they are in dire need of encouragement.

Speak to the child about the effects of his/her disruptions and the consequences.

Take the child aside.

Talk to the child about his/her disruptions.

Inform the child what consequences the child will have if he/she continues being disruptive.

Be kind but firm. Tell the child, “I am glad you are in my class, but sometimes you {are too loud, move around too much, bother the other children} and it makes it hard to teach. I would like you to be in my class, but if you cannot behave, I am afraid you will not be able to attend.”

Remove the child if necessary.

Unfortunately, there comes a time when the disruptive child has to be removed from the classroom. These steps will ensure that the child is removed properly:

Note: Every Sunday School teacher should have an adult aide already available to help in the classroom. I will give you further details on this in

the section, "How to Create Sunday School Teams."

Ask the aide to locate a parent.

Keep the child as calm as possible until the parent arrives.

Once the parent arrives, instruct the aide to continue teaching.

Take the child and parent to an area that is private.

Discuss the reasons you want the child removed.

Have an Event Record on hand (see, "How to Keep Records" for more details).

Have the parent sign the document, and then sign it yourself.

Inform the parent when the child can return to the classroom.

Have the parent keep the child in their care for the remainder of the service.

Return to the classroom once you have composed yourself.

Sometimes the child may not have a parent present if he/she comes to Sunday School by means of bus transportation. The Sunday School teacher should already have a church authority available to them in case they need them to remove a disruptive child. A plan should already be established between the teacher and the authority in case an event like this should occur.

I would suggest enlisting a Deacon to perform this task. Following these steps will ensure that the child is removed properly:

Have the aide locate the Deacon.

Once the Deacon has arrived, have the aide continue with the lesson.

The Deacon and yourself, along with the child, should find a private place to discuss the issues.

Tell the Deacon your side of the story. Allow the child to tell theirs.

Have an Event Record on hand.

Fill out the Event Record and sign it.

Have the Deacon sign the document, and fill in the information as to how he handled the situation.

Place the child in the Deacon's custody for the remainder of the service.

Make 2 copies of the Event Record and send one to a parent via the bus driver, or mail it.

Give your pastor the other copy.

Return to the classroom once you have composed yourself.

For the most part, I have found that the first method of using the child as a helper resulted with great success. Rarely have the other steps come into play. In my three years of teaching, I only recall one time in which a child had to be removed from the class.

Chapter 6: How to Create Sunday School Teams

Creating a Sunday School team is no longer just a concept, it has been put into place and has become an extremely useful tool. Once we began using teams in our Sunday School program we noticed that the children were more responsive to the lesson. There are many advantages to having team members assist in the Sunday School classroom.

Choosing your team members

Setting up a team to help assist you will require you to do a little research. Try these methods to help you with locating possible members for your team:

Note: Team members MUST be eighteen years or older!

Place an announcement in your weekly church bulletin.

Post a notice on your church's bulletin board.

Talk to people who volunteer in these ministries.

Get referrals from your pastor.

Make a vocal announcement at church.

Remember, you are not looking for pros, so keep that in mind. You will be surprised at how many people would love to help. You will need to look for people who can either teach or have been involved in these ministries. The team will consist of people who are semi skilled in the following areas:

Arts and crafts (two people)

Teaching or playing sports (two people)

Playing music or singing

Puppetry

Performing in drama or skits

Aiding in the classroom (look for 4 people to fill this position. You can get by with two if 4 are not available. Aides do not necessarily need to be skilled or have previous experience. A good aide will be someone who enjoys working with children, shows enthusiasm, and has proven to be reliable).

Speaking or teaching

It is a rarity to find a Sunday School teacher who is gifted in all these areas. Utilizing team members will be rewarding not only to the students, but to the teacher as well. It is the Sunday School teacher's responsibility to see that the children's spiritual needs are being met. Sometimes, in order to achieve the goal, we need to rely on the help of others. I highly recommend that teachers put together a team to assist them.

Once you have found people that are interested in being team members, then you should do the following:

Schedule a meeting.

Have snacks and drinks to offer during the meeting.

Thank everyone for attending the meeting.

4. Open the meeting with a prayer.

5. Inform the group of the positions you want to fill.

6. Discuss the details of each position.

7. Discuss what you will require from the person who fills the position.

8. Make a list of interested candidates.

9. Write down their availability.

10. Watch how people communicate with one another.

11. Have a time for questions and answers.

12. Ask those who have decided to become members to stay.

13. Politely ask those who have chosen not to participate to leave.

14. Make a rough draft of the schedule.

15. Ask the members to look it over.

16. Make any necessary changes to the schedule.

17. Close the meeting with a prayer.

Make a rotating schedule for your team members.

If you’re lucky enough, you will find two people who enjoy arts and crafts, and two who enjoy sports. Other than an aide, of which you need four, ideally, you can use your other members on occasion. Don’t wait until the last minute to ask someone for help. Plan a monthly schedule in which you can use one of the two arts & crafts people every other week, and the same with your sports people.

If you have found four aides, then use one per week. If not, then find at least two that you can rotate. As for those who love puppetry, music, drama, or speaking, try and use them once a month. Bringing them in may mean that you have to cut an activity that week, or shorten something like your Q&A time, or have them come in during snack time.

Plan a monthly meeting for your team members.

Monthly meetings are a great tool to keep your members informed. The meeting should last anywhere from an hour to an hour and a half. To ensure that you have covered everything that needs to be discussed, follow this meeting plan:

Schedule your meeting during the week, not on a weekend.

Have some snacks and drinks available during the meeting.

Open the meeting with a prayer.

Enlist someone to take notes during the meeting.

Begin by informing the group of what positions you need filled and when, covering the following month too.

Find out the availability of those who will be involved.

Go over the lesson plans for the following month so those who will be involved will know how to correlate their activity with the lesson.

Using a copy of your schedule template, pencil in the name of the person who will be assisting you and place it on the Sunday when you will be requiring their assistance. You can follow the steps that were given to make your “Sunday School Schedule Plan” in order to make a template for your “Team Member Schedule.” Your schedule template might look like this:

Leaders:1st Sunday.2ndSunday 3rd Sunday 4th Sunday.5th Sunday

Teacher

Arts & Crafts

Sports/Games

Music

Puppetry

Drama/Skits

9. Once the schedule is complete and all areas have been covered, pass the schedule around so the members can view it.

10. Inquire whether the schedule is acceptable to the members or if any changes need to be made.

11. Once the schedule is agreed upon, make copies of the schedule.

12. Give each member a copy.

13. Open a forum to generate ideas for future lessons or activities.

14. Discuss any concerns or problems that have arisen in the past.

15. Generate solutions for these problems.

16. Close the meeting with a prayer.

Use your meetings as times to bounce ideas off one another and to form your monthly schedule. It is perfectly okay to have a time of fellowship where you can get to know your team members on a more personal basis. You need to be aware, though, that doing so can lead to a time of gossiping and backbiting. You are the leader of the team, so it is your responsibility to "nip it in the bud" when you hear a conversation that is veering in that direction.

Maintaining Your Team

Once you have a team assembled, it is important to keep your team maintained in order for your team to remain productive. Keep in mind that "burn out" is the main reason that team members loose their effectiveness in assisting you. In order to keep your team maintained, you should do the following:

Provide support when needed.

A good leader will be available to help when a team member needs assistance. You may find that you might have to offer your services at times to pick up needed craft items for the person who will be leading arts & crafts.

Show appreciation for their efforts.

Give praise often. Be encouraging. Even though a team member has volunteered to help, it doesn't necessarily mean that they feel qualified. Some members may actually feel inadequate at what they are doing. Giving them a boost of confidence may be exactly what they need.

Be a good listener.

If a team member approaches you with a problem, whether it concerns the Sunday School class or not, listen carefully to what they are telling you. You don't necessarily need to fix the problem; they may just need a listening ear.

Pair team members with mentors.

If you have someone who would like to volunteer to help but feels that they would be inadequate in doing so, then suggest that they begin by helping a team member who already seems skilled in that particular area. Some team members may have a calling in a specific area and this will give them the opportunity to teach others.

Plan schedules so that team members don’t get “burned out.”

Make sure that you are using a rotating schedule. Don’t rely on the same person to do the exact same thing every week. This is why I recommend that you have at least two people for arts & crafts and for sports. Remember that your musicians, your puppeteers, and those who perform drama or skits need time to practice beforehand, so try and schedule them once a month.

Chapter 7: How To Keep Important Records

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Keeping record of certain items such as attendance, events that took place in the classroom, and what was being taught, is very crucial. Basically, you, as the Sunday School teacher and the church itself, have become a target for lawsuits. In keeping these records, you will have a safety net in case a lawsuit should occur.

There is nothing worse that can happen to you than for you to build up a successful Sunday School ministry and then watch it fall apart overnight due to an unseen lawsuit. Most times, the accuser doesn't have a leg to stand on, especially if you have kept excellent records. In the past few years, I have seen churches being destroyed because a teacher has been falsely accused of inappropriately touching or mishandling a child.

The following list of records should be kept. This job can be assigned to your aide. I have informed you of all the information that should be kept in each record. These records are the ones that you, as the Sunday School teacher, or your aide should fill out every Sunday. If you don't already have these at your disposal, then print some up. You can make your own template on your word processor and have access to them when you need more. Always have them in the classroom where they are available.

Attendance Record

This record should include the following:

Child’s full name

Age of child & birth date

Parent or contact name

Address

A place to record the date and to write whether the child is present or absent.

The name of the person who dropped the child off in your class (some children arrive on the bus instead of having a parent drop them off, therefore you should write “bus rider” in that spot).

The signature and date of the person who recorded the information.

Here is an example of what this document might look like:

Child's name_____

Birth date _____

Parent’s name_____

Address_____

Date_____

__Absent __Attending

Person who delivered child_____

I attest that I recorded the above information:

Signature_____

Date_____

The reason for this document is simple. Let's say you just received a summons to appear in court because "Johnny" has accused you of touching him inappropriately. This event supposedly took place on June 17th when "Johnny" was in your classroom. You know that no such event occurred, but how can you prove your innocence? You happen to look back into your records and guess what? "Johnny" was absent on June 17th. Lucky for you that you were diligent in your record keeping!

The Lesson

This record should include the following:

The title of the lesson

The date

A list of names of the people who were involved in giving the lesson. This should include all the team members and aides who were present during the service, and what roles they played.

A list of names of the children present

Any prayer requests

Signatures from at least two people who were in the room.

This record is mainly kept in case you, as the teacher, should become ill. It will give your replacement an idea of what has been previously taught so that a lesson will not be repeated. It is also useful as a backup record in case one of your members have been accused of something.

Here is an example of what this document might look like:

Title of lesson:_____

Date:_____

Teachers & activity performed:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Names of children present:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Prayer requests: _____

_____

_____

_____

Witness: _____

Witness: _____

Event Record

This record should include the following:

The date

A description of the event that happened. (This should be a detailed summary recorded by someone who actually witnessed the event. If “Tommy” became disruptive, or caused a fight, or slapped a teacher or a team member, record ALL the details! If a child gives their life to Christ, you should also record this. If a child is upset, record it. There is no event that might occur that doesn’t need to be noted!)

3. A description of how the event was handled and the name of the person that handled the situation.

4. Witness signatures. Signed and dated.

I cannot stress enough, the importance of this document! Documentation of these events will ensure that you have vital information available when needed. I pray that an accusation of wrongdoing never occurs. However, in the event that you are accused, you will have these records as your “leg to stand on” if you keep them properly.

Here is an example of how this document might look:

Date:_____

Description of event:

_____
_____
_____
_____

_____
_____

How the event was handled:

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Chapter 8: How to Incorporate Preventive Measures

Sharing the responsibility for the children in our care goes to both the church and the teacher. When you volunteered you were saying that you love children and that you want to help them, nourish them, and see to their spiritual needs. In order to do that, you will require a place where the child can go to learn about God and also feel safe in the process. Churches that endorse preventative measures are not only looking out for the child, but for you as well.

Having a preventative measure program in place ensures that the Church stays a vital part of the community. The church is to be the “light of the world.” Having a bad reputation diminishes the ability to do what we have been called to do. Recent lawsuits have put a bad light on the church. Taking every precaution to ensure that this doesn’t happen to your church is essential to the wellbeing of the church.

What preventative measures need to be taken?

Background Checks

We always want to think highly of those who teach our children or perform some type of ministry in our church. Unfortunately, in today’s society, the church cannot afford to rely on instinct alone. We have observed the character of some of the most prominent people being scrutinized. Even worse are the watchful eyes of those that would love to see the church fall, and await the opportunity for an open door.

Every person that is involved in any type of ministry in the church should be willing to submit to a background check. Whether or not you have previously committed a crime will not matter if you have made restitution for that crime. It is undisclosed information that we are seeking.

As the teacher, you need to gather from each person the following information in order to begin a background check:

Name

Year and date of birth

Parents' names

Where they were born

Who they married or divorced

Dates of marriages or divorces

Where they have resided

Once you have obtained this information, give it to your pastor. Generally, there will be someone in the church that processes the background check.

There may also be an “Agreement to Submit to a Background Check” form for your team members to sign.

Keeping Records

We have already touched on this area, so I won't go into great detail. Keeping these records is a critical part of the preventative measure process. For this reason, I want to give you some tips on having these records at your disposal:

Make up templates on your word processor so that you will have them available to print when needed.

Make at least ten copies of each of the records.

Designate a place in the classroom where you can easily access them.

Keep pens available nearby.

On Sunday, have the three documents accessible by placing them on a clipboard.

In a small filing cabinet, file the records that have been filled out into a designated folder.

Note: It would be helpful if your team members knew how to fill out these forms properly.

Performing Safety Drills

Here is an area that you, as the teacher, have probably never given much thought to. You are not alone. Many churches do not have a plan intact in case a fire should break out or a disaster should strike. We like to believe that the church is the safest place to be; for the most part, it is. However, having a plan just in case a disaster of some sort should arise makes perfect sense.

Producing a Fire Escape Plan

There are some very basic steps to producing a fire escape plan. Start by following these guidelines:

Start by choosing an exit in your classroom through which your children will be able to get out of the building as quickly as possible.

Make note of any windows that can be easily accessed in the event that your children cannot go out through the door. Check and see how easily these windows can be opened in an emergency.

Be aware of any obstacles in the room that may hinder your escape.

Choose a place outside of the building where everyone should gather.

Designate someone to take roll call.

Make a drawing of your church.

Mark where certain rooms are located on the drawing.

Mark an X on your classroom and use arrows to explain your escape route.

Mark where your outside meeting place should be.

Have an additional escape route planned in case fire should make the first route inaccessible.

Review the plans with your students.

Schedule a fire drill at least once every two months.

Make sure all your team members know the plan.

Place your fire escape plan in the classroom where children can see it.

Have the children occasionally follow the escape plan on their hands and knees.

Teach children how to keep their bodies close to the floor without belly crawling since smoke from the fire causes poisonous sediments to settle on the floor.

Teach the children how to test a door handle for heat. Never open a door that is hot, unless a fireman tells you to.

The main reason that I encourage you to practice safety drills at least once every two months is because, unlike the school or at home, new students appear more frequently; therefore, every student should be aware of the process. I would also encourage the teacher to incorporate safety procedures for pick ups and drop offs. With the rise in divorces and nasty custody battles, it is important for the Sunday School teacher to be knowledgeable of who the custodial parent is or with whom the child may leave. There have been cases in which a child has willingly left with a non custodial parent who was taking illegal custody of and fleeing with said child. So far, no Sunday School teacher, to my knowledge, has ever been held accountable by the court for handing the child over. However, every day we are seeing new laws being enacted that are aimed at the responsibilities of the church.

I have covered all the basics of teaching Sunday School for the modern day Sunday School teacher. There is one last thing, though, that I believe the Sunday School teacher should do. He/She should take very good care of herself physically, mentally, and spiritually. As a Sunday School teacher, your job is ensuring that the spiritual needs of the children who have been placed in your care are being met. This can only be accomplished if the teacher is healthy in all areas of her life.

It is very important that you make sure that you are having your spiritual needs met. Be willing to allow others to teach in your place on occasion so that you can be taught by your pastor. Like any professional teacher, you need continuing studies and instruction; we are always learning. There is so much more to learn, and there is so much more that needs to be taught.

About the Author

Shirley Janisse was born in Bloomington, Indiana in 1961 to Henry Lee and Elva Richardson. She still resides in Bloomington with her husband Norman to whom she has been married for 16 years. She has raised two sons: Timothy, who is 30, and Jacob, who is 19. She has three wonderful grandchildren: Dylan; age 11, Shaylee ; age 4, and Tristan; age 3.

Shirley loves to write, and has taken her writing abilities to a new level. She has begun writing for the Christian audience. She recently completed a collection of children's Bible stories that will reach thousands of children in foreign countries, through the use of Apple Computer technology.

Her desire to write this e book came about from the struggle she had while teaching her Sunday School class. "I knew something needed to change if we were going to reach today's generation of children," she stated. "We cannot use the old methods of teaching, they just don't appeal to this new generation."

Along with her desire to see classrooms overflowing with children receiving the Word of God, she has a desire to spread the Gospel through her writing, bringing both hope and encouragement to her reading audience.

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