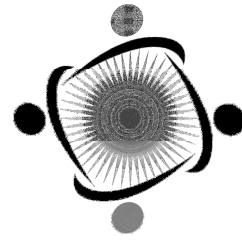


Fall 2009 Sunday School Emphasis: GO – Make the Connection with Others



SUNDAY SCHOOL | DISCIPLESHIP
MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

Make the Connection

The Great Commission reminds us that we are to “Go and make Disciples of all nations, baptizing them...and teach (them) to obey...” (Matthew 28:19). Over the next two years we will be emphasizing the importance of that great commission from Jesus.

People are waiting on us to invite them to church...to our local Sunday School class. Tom Rainer, in his book *The Unchurched Next Door*, discovered that 97% of the unchurched said that they were likely or somewhat likely to attend church if someone invited them to come! The question is, “Who will invite them?” The answer should be, “Me.”

You and I are the ones our neighbors, friends, relatives, work associates – young and old alike – are waiting on to invite them to Sunday School. During this spring emphasis, we are encouraging you to motivate and prayerfully consider who God will place on your heart to invite to Sunday School. God will use our witness and invitation to speak to people and draw them to Himself.

- September 20 – Preparation Sunday
- September 27 – Connecting with Family
- October 4 – Connecting with Neighbors and Friends
- October 11 – Connecting with Co-Workers and Classmates
- October 18 – Connecting with Community
- October 25 – Connecting with the Church

Preparation Sunday (September 20)

- Prior to this Sunday, meet with Sunday School teachers and enlist them in introducing the theme---“Make the Connection with Others”---to their classes.
- Prior to the emphasis, recruit people to pray for the Sunday School responsibility list. Divide the responsibility list, and ask volunteers to pray for the people listed in each class.
- Duplicate names, addresses, approximate age and phone numbers of those currently attending one of the other services of the church – morning and/or evening worship, Wednesday evening services, small groups, sports programs, etc. If they are not also attending Sunday School, put them on a list of prospects.
- Give the lists to the appropriate Sunday School teachers, and encourage them to ask Sunday School members to make contact with three people they would invite to Sunday School over the next five weeks of the emphasis.
- During the morning worship service, have the pastor stress the Sunday School emphasis. Have the pastor ask the teachers and class officers to come forward for a time of prayer as the emphasis is launched.

- Use posters, bulletin inserts, and other promotional ideas that accentuate the emphasis of “GO--
- Make the Connection with Others.”

Connecting with Family (September 27)

The idea of family has evolved over the years. The Biblical ideal of the “nuclear family” that includes only the husband, the wife, and unmarried child(ren) has been fractured. Today stepparents, stepchildren, half siblings, single-parent homes as well as the traditional nuclear family exist...and all of them need Jesus. The Sunday School is a great tool to enrich the lives of families through Christian fellowship and learning. The unchurched members of the families in your church are important prospects for your Sunday School.

- Have a special children’s program during the Sunday School hour, and have the children invite their families – including their unchurched family members – to attend. Invite people from your adult classes to be present to greet them. Have a fellowship time with refreshments. Encourage adult class leaders and greeters to invite the unchurched family members to their adult classes. Circulate a sign up sheet to get the names addresses, phone numbers, and emails for follow up.
- Encourage people who have no family living in the area to invite another family for Sunday School and worship and to then have them over for a meal after the services.
- Have the Sunday School children invite their grandparents to come to Sunday School and attend their Sunday School class. If they do not have grandparents in the area ask them to “adopt” grandparents for the day and come to the class.
- Honor special family groups, such as the family with the most present in Sunday School, the most children present, the most grandchildren present, or the family with the most generations present. Do this during the morning worship service, and possibly have a token gift available for them.
- Recognize the single adults in the Sunday School/church. Let them know they are valued, and recognize their involvement as a vital part of the Sunday School/church family. Single Adult Ministries includes those who are divorced, never-married and widowed. Single Adult Ministries website is: <http://www.nazarene.org/ministries/ssm/adult/single/display.aspx>

Connecting With Neighbors and Friends (October 4)

Neighbors and friends include people who live around you and friends with whom you have made a bonding connection. Encourage people to invite their neighbors and friends...including children and teens...to attend Sunday School on this special Sunday.

- Between Sunday School and morning worship, have a brunch either provided through catering or by members. During the brunch, introduce all of the Sunday School teachers, and tell what class they teach. Invite the neighbors and friends to stay for the morning worship service.

Introduce the pastor and spouse at the brunch before the morning worship service begins.

- Encourage Sunday School members to hold a neighborhood block party during the week prior to this special Sunday and invite those neighbors and friends to Sunday School. If possible ask the pastor, Sunday School Superintendent, and teachers to attend these block parties.
- Sponsor a neighborhood “Let’s Get Acquainted Day” at the church prior to this special Sunday. Have a festival of activities for the family. Children...Children’s games, inflatable toys, face painting, pony rides, etc. Teens...concert with a teen emphasis, ultimate Frisbee, sports events, etc. Adults...pie eating contest, exhibitions and workshops on various matters such as household repairs, car repair, quilting, canning, candle making, etc. Have a sign-in sheet available for names, addresses, phone, and Emails.

Connecting with Co-workers and Classmates (October 11)

We are thrust outside of the family unit, plunging us into the world of employment and/or education. We interact with people outside our home and church families on a daily basis. The involvement of schools and the workplace are important to the growth of the local community and neighbors. There are many co-workers and classmates who need our encouragement and the Sunday School class. A Sunday School class can be an important element in their lives.

- Have Sunday School class members write a note of encouragement to three classmates or co-workers before this Sunday. At the end of the note invite them to attend Sunday School.
- Invite co-workers and classmates to attend morning worship. As part of the worship service, consider asking one person to tell how a co-worker has impacted his/her life for Christ, and one person to share how a fellow student has lived a Christ-like example.
- Recognize the educators in your congregation. Consider inviting the local school superintendent, principal, vice-principle, teacher and support staff member to this special day. During prayer time, ask those individuals to come forward for a special prayer.
- Have each Sunday School class compile a collage of pictures of their class members “on the job” or “in their classroom” at school. Home schoolers can bring pictures of some of their activities in their “classroom setting.” Post the collages in a prominent place for others to see.

Connecting With Community (October 18)

Perception plays a vital role of the church in the community. Do people know that your church is concerned with the whole range of needs represented in the community ...emotional, physical, and spiritual? Are community people open to approaching the local Sunday School people with needs? Your goals for this Sunday should be to increase community awareness of your church and to begin cultivating a relationship between your church and the

surrounding community.

- Contact local community leaders and ask for a community project (park, river area, highway, etc.) that the people of the Sunday School/church can help clean up. Get T Shirts with the church's name or Sunday School class names printed on them.
- Volunteer at a homeless shelter, women's shelter, nursing home, youth center, rescue mission or other places that need assistance. Have name badges with the church logo imprinted.
- If the church has nurses or doctors available, have a free blood pressure testing between Sunday School and worship on this Sunday.
- Open your church up for a blood drive with one of the blood donor organizations or in conjunction with your local hospital.
- Make a list of people in the community who could be invited and honored on this day. Include politicians, public service officials (firemen, police, paramedics, government workers), and directors of community programs and organizations. Publically acknowledge their presence in the services, and call them forward for a special prayer time.
- Take pictures of these events and submit a story and photos to the local newspaper.

Connecting With the Church (October 25)

Many years ago, the Sunday School was the attendance feeder into the church. Sunday School attendance was much larger than worship. Today it is reversed. Morning worship is now the door through which many people enter Sunday School. The worship service is a natural avenue for recruiting people for Sunday School because those who attend worship are already aware of the specifics of the Sunday School...location, time, personnel, and spiritual dimension.

- Sunday School classes should contact every person on their responsibility lists.
- Have the church office prepare a list of visitors who have attended worship in the last year, and give these names to the appropriate classes. Each class will be responsible for contacting people on the list.
- For this Sunday reverse the order of services. If Sunday School is first have it in the morning worship slot and worship in the Sunday School hour.
- Plan a potluck lunch after church for fellowship and connecting. Place a brochure or flyer at each table listing all of the Sunday School classes and discipleship groups offered by the church. Honor all of the Sunday School teachers/staff at this time, and give a small gift to each one.
- Start a new Sunday School class or small group. Naturally this has been in the planning stages for several months, but this is the launch date.
- Challenge each Sunday School class to sponsor a class ministry to members of the church.

Examples may include visiting homebound church members, providing a hot meal for a single-parent family, delivering groceries to elderly members, or providing free childcare for a family with children. Children's classes can make cards or plant flowers for the homebound.

- Youth classes can do yard work for disabled person.
- Adults class members can "adopt" a teen or child and have them over for a meal or take them to their favorite restaurant. Adults must be prepared to go to a pizza place, fast food restaurant, or ice cream shop!