

The Sunday School Leadership Team:

Who They Are and What They Do

The Sunday School leadership team is made up of every person who has been enlisted as a Sunday School leader in any age group. Everyone is a member of the team working to implement the Sunday School strategy.

All persons deserve the benefit of knowing the expectations and responsibilities of their role. Furthermore, a clear statement of basic roles and major responsibilities can be a tremendous encouragement to those who are considering accepting a position of leadership. When leaders understand what they are supposed to do and can see that they are not alone, but are working as a part of a team, they are more likely to respond positively to the call to lead and serve. They are more likely to be effective and satisfied in their role.

The Sunday School Planning Team: Basic Role

The Sunday School Planning Team is comprised of the leaders with responsibility for the general oversight of a church's Sunday School ministry and leaders who provide administrative leadership for a particular age-group division or major affinity group, such as a Special Education Division. As a team, these leaders are responsible for the overall direction, planning, and operation of the church' Sunday School strategy. This team includes the pastor; other church ministers with responsibilities related to Sunday School; Sunday School director; the general outreach-evangelism director (or FAITH director); Sunday School secretary; division directors for each age-group division, and the Discipleship director, or mission ministries directors.

Major Responsibilities of the Sunday School Leadership Team

- ✚ Set goals that lead Sunday School toward fulfilling the church's strategic objectives
- ✚ Develop action plans for accomplishing the goals.
- ✚ Set calendar dates for special events that support the ongoing objectives of Sunday School ministry and contribute significantly to achieving its goals.
- ✚ Communicate the overall mission (objective) and message of Sunday School strategy to other leaders and the entire church.
- ✚ Provide direction for, and coordinate the work of, age groups, including leader enlistment and leader training, toward the overall objective of Sunday School.
- ✚ Evaluate the effectiveness of the Sunday School strategy as implemented.
- ✚ Set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and by being thoroughly involved in the life and ministry of the church.

The Pastor and Other Ministers: Primary Role

The pastor is the primary leader for a church's Sunday School strategy. Rarely will a Sunday School stay on its purpose without the visible, vital leadership of its pastor. The pastor and other ministers on the church staff are responsible for the overall direction of all of the church's ministries, including Sunday School.

The pastor works with the Sunday School Planning Team to set goals and evaluate the Sunday School's effectiveness in engaging people in evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and worship through Bible study groups.

Major Responsibilities of Pastor and Ministers

- ✚ Provide overall leadership to the Sunday School Planning Team.
- ✚ Lead the team in keeping Sunday School ministry focused on its objective.
- ✚ Give vital and visible support to Sunday School and its leaders.
- ✚ Communicate the overall mission (objective) and message of Sunday School to the entire church.
- ✚ Guide team members toward spiritual maturity and assist them in developing skills that enhance their ability to fulfill their responsibilities.
- ✚ Set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and by being thoroughly involved in the life and ministry of the church.\

The Sunday School Director: Primary Role

The Sunday School director serves as the general administrative leader of a church's Sunday School ministry. This person is responsible for coordinating the work of all Sunday School classes, departments, and other Bible study groups toward the overarching objective of Sunday School. He leads the Sunday School Planning Team in planning, organizing, enlisting and equipping leaders and in mobilizing members to achieve goals toward the stated objectives.

As your Sunday School ministry expands in size and scope, additional leaders may be needed or desired to deal with specific responsibilities that are assigned to the Sunday School director. For example, a church may need an assistant Sunday School director or a Bible projects director (such as VBS director or January Bible Study director). These persons may become members of the Sunday School Planning Team and be responsible to the Sunday School director.

Major Responsibilities of the Sunday School Director

- ✚ Meet regularly with the Sunday School Planning Team.
- ✚ Communicate goals and actions to leaders and participants and evaluate progress.
- ✚ Lead in developing an effective organization that facilitates spiritual transformation.
- ✚ Lead in efforts to call participants into service and in enlisting and developing new leaders.
- ✚ Lead in evaluating needs related to space, budget, Bible study curriculum, supplies, and other resources; recommend needed actions.
- ✚ Set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and through full involvement in the life and ministry of the church.

The Outreach-Evangelism Director (FAITH Director): Primary Role

The outreach-evangelism director provides overall direction and leadership toward involving unreached people in Sunday School classes and departments. This person gives essential leadership to keeping the focus on evangelism. The Sunday School director assumes this role in churches without an outreach-evangelism director.

In churches using FAITH, the FAITH Director should fill this position.

Major Responsibilities of the Outreach-Evangelism Director

- ✚ Meet regularly with the Sunday School Planning Team.
- ✚ Assist in discovering, enlisting, and training age-group division outreach-evangelism directors and outreach-evangelism leaders for youth and adult departments and classes.
- ✚ Promote outreach and evangelism objectives with other leaders and members.
- ✚ Guide all actions for outreach and evangelism through Sunday School ministry, and coordinate those efforts with other church outreach and evangelism efforts.
- ✚ Lead in keeping the focus on evangelism.
- ✚ Ensure that accurate records are kept so that contacts with visitors and prospects can be effectively maintained and Sunday School classes and departments can effectively work to meet needs.
- ✚ Lead in evaluating outreach and evangelism efforts made through Sunday School ministry.
- ✚ Set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and by being thoroughly involved in the life and ministry of the church.

The Sunday School Secretary: Primary Role

The Sunday School secretary assists the Sunday School Planning Team by providing vital support related to record keeping, reports, and other communications; securing Bible study curriculum, supplies, and other resources; and coordinating the distribution of resources. The Sunday School director or outreach-evangelism director assumes this role in churches without a Sunday School secretary.

Major Responsibilities of the Sunday School Secretary

- ✚ Meet regularly with the Sunday School Planning Team.
- ✚ Process and maintain general records for Sunday School and compile reports, including prospect information.
- ✚ Coordinate ordering and distribution of Bible study curriculum materials, supplies, and other resources.
- ✚ Set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and by being thoroughly involved in the life and ministry of the church.

The Age-Group Leaders: Primary Role

By far, the majority of leaders in Sunday School ministry relate to specific age groups. These leaders relate to one of the following basic roles:

- division directors, department directors, and others who provide administrative leadership for the work of an age group;
- teachers, coordinators, apprentices, and class team leaders who guide participants in Bible study and in doing the functions of evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and worship.

Major Responsibilities of Division Directors

Division directors are responsible to the Sunday School director for the total ministry of their age-group division, including planning, organizing, enlisting leaders, and evaluating the work in light of the objectives of Sunday School. Division directors also serve on the Sunday School Planning Team. They must work closely with other members of that team as well as with their age-group division and department leaders.

Their primary responsibilities are to:

- meet regularly with the Sunday School Planning Team;

- coordinate the work of the division and determine organizational needs;
- discover, enlist, and train new leaders;
- evaluate, encourage, affirm, and direct age-group leaders in their ministry;
- meet regularly with department leaders for planning and evaluation;
- evaluate all needs related to space, budget, Bible study curriculum, supplies, and other resources; recommend actions related to needs;
- set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and by being thoroughly involved in the life and ministry of the church.

Major Responsibilities of Division Outreach-Evangelism Directors

Division outreach-evangelism directors work with the division directors for their age groups and the general outreach-evangelism director to lead their divisions in outreach and evangelism. They work closely with department leaders.

In churches using FAITH Sunday School Evangelism Strategy, these persons should be FAITH Group Leaders or Team Leaders.

Their primary responsibilities are to:

- coordinate all evangelism and outreach activities of the division;
- coordinate prospect-discovery efforts of the division;
- assist in training division and department leaders and members in evangelism and outreach;
- evaluate, encourage, affirm, and direct age-group leaders in their evangelism and outreach efforts;
- promote outreach and evangelism objectives with other leaders in their evangelism and outreach efforts;
- maintain active division and department prospect records;

- greet visitors and guide them to the meeting place of their Bible study group;
- set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and by being thoroughly involved in the life and ministry of the church.

Major Responsibilities of Division Secretaries

Division secretaries assist the division directors by providing vital support related to record keeping, reports, and other communications; securing Bible study curriculum, supplies, and other resources; and coordinating the distribution of resources.

Their primary responsibilities are to:

- meet regularly with the division leadership team;
- process and maintain general records for the division and compile reports as requested, including prospect information;
- coordinate ordering and distribution of Bible study curriculum, supplies, and other resources;
- set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and by being thoroughly involved in the life and ministry of the church.

Major Responsibilities of Department Directors

Department directors are responsible to the division director of their age group for the total ministry of their department. Department directors work closely with teachers, encouraging them and assisting them in fulfilling their responsibilities.

Their primary responsibilities are to:

- lead in planning and administering the total work of the department;

- meet regularly with teachers for prayer, planning, and making assignments related to evangelism and outreach, ministry, fellowship, and Bible teaching;
- serve as a greeter/host for the department;
- serve as the lead teacher for the department, directing the overall teaching-learning experience and teaching during parts of the session that involve all participants and teachers together;
- evaluate all needs related to space, budget, Bible study curriculum, supplies, and other resources; recommend actions related to needs;
- maintain attendance records and other participant information that strengthens the groups' pursuit of the overall objectives of Sunday School;
- set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and by being thoroughly involved in the life and ministry of the church.

Other department leaders, such as a department outreach-evangelism director or department secretary, may be enlisted as needed or desired to assist the department director with administering evangelism and record-keeping tasks.

Major Responsibilities of Department Outreach-Evangelism Directors

Department outreach-evangelism directors work with the department directors for their age groups, the division outreach-evangelism director, and the general outreach-evangelism director to lead their departments in outreach and evangelism. They work closely with class outreach-evangelism leaders.

In churches using FAITH Sunday School Evangelism Strategy, these persons should be FAITH Group Leaders or Team Leaders.

Their primary responsibilities are to:

- coordinate all evangelism and outreach activities of the department;
- coordinate prospect-discovery efforts for the department;

- assist in training department and class leaders and members in evangelism and outreach;
- evaluate, encourage affirm, and direct age-group leaders in their evangelism and outreach efforts;
- promote outreach and evangelism objectives with other leaders and members;
- maintain active department prospect records;
- greet visitors and guide them to the meeting place for their Bible study group;
- set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and by being thoroughly involved in the life and ministry of the church.

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Major Responsibilities of Department Secretaries:

Department secretaries assist the department directors by providing vital support related to record keeping, reports, and other communications; securing Bible study curriculum, supplies, and other resources; and coordination the distribution of resources.

Their primary responsibilities are to:

- meet regularly with the department leadership team;
- process and maintain general records for the department and compile reports as requested, including prospect information;
- coordinate ordering and distribution of Bible study curriculum, supplies, and other resources;
- set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and by being thoroughly involved in the life and ministry of the church.

Major Responsibilities of Teachers

Teachers are responsible for leading people toward faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and for guiding them to serve Him through evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship, and worship. In pursuing that mission, teachers understand that teaching moves beyond the Bible study session into the daily living of participants. Teachers look for opportunities to mentor participants before and after Bible study session. They help to ensure that a positive ministry environment is provided during the session, one that facilitates the work of the Holy Spirit. They invest themselves in building positive relationships with participants, and they involve learners in meaningful Bible study.

Their primary responsibilities are to:

- lead a small group in meaningful Bible study;
- build positive relationships with participants and prospects and ensure that they are contacted regularly in order to meet needs;
- maintain attendance records and other participant information that strengthens the group's pursuit of the overall objectives of Sunday School;
- lead participants toward faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and to become on-mission Christians. In youth and adult groups, organize the class to support effectively those objectives;
- in adult groups-enlist other class leaders to assist with major responsibilities (See class leader position descriptions below.);
- set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and by being thoroughly involved in the life and ministry of the church.

Major Responsibilities of Class Outreach-Evangelism Leaders

Class outreach-evangelism leaders work with the department outreach-evangelism director to lead the class in outreach and evangelism. In churches using the FAITH Sunday School Evangelism Strategy, these persons work with the department outreach-evangelism leader to administer classes' involvement in FAITH.

Their primary responsibilities are:

- Coordinate all evangelism and outreach activities of the class;

- Coordinate prospect-discovery and prospect enlistment efforts of the class;
- Serve as “greeter/host” for the class, making guests as well as members feel welcome and wanted. *(Arrive about 15 minutes early to select prospects for assignment and to check classroom readiness and attractiveness.)*
- Lead class members to create an atmosphere that encourages unsaved people to place their faith in Christ and encourages believers to lead others to Christ;
- Maintain class prospect records;
- Set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and by being thoroughly involved in the life and ministry of the church.

Major Responsibilities of Class Coordinators

Class coordinators are adults who may be enlisted for adult or youth Bible study classes to direct the overall work of the class, relieving the teacher of administrative responsibilities. The class coordinator works closely with both the teacher and class team leaders to ensure that all functions are addressed appropriately and that the class is properly organized and mobilized for its mission of leading people to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and building on-missions Christians.

Major Responsibilities of Apprentices

Apprentices are enlisted from adult classes to assist a teacher in his major responsibilities. The apprentice serves as a substitute for the teacher when the teacher must be absent. The apprentice is a class leader and needs to be enlisted according to the same procedure used in the church to enlist other class leaders. One long-term objective of enlisting apprentices is that of helping to prepare leaders for new Bible study units that will be created. When an apprentice is enlisted as the teacher for a new Bible study group, however, he should be enlisted according to the same procedure used to enlist other teachers.

Major Responsibilities of Class Secretaries

Class secretaries assist class teachers by providing vital support related to record keeping, reports, and other communications; obtaining Bible study curriculum, supplies, and other resources; and coordinating the distribution of resources.

Their primary responsibilities are to

- meet regularly with the class leadership team;
- process and maintain general records for the class and compile reports as requested, including prospect information;
- coordinate ordering and distribution of Bible study curriculum, supplies, and other resources;
- set a positive example for others by living as an authentic witness of Christ and by being thoroughly involved in the life and ministry of the church.

Major Responsibilities of Other Class Leaders

Class leaders are enlisted by the teacher of an adult or youth Bible study class to assist with the total work of the group. Class leaders work in one or more of the five functions areas in either a leader-based approach or a team-based approach. Generally, the class outreach-evangelism leader heads efforts that address the evangelism function.

- ***Evangelism.*** - Create an atmosphere that encourages unsaved people to place their faith in Christ and encourages believers to lead others to Christ. In churches using the FAITH Sunday school Evangelism Strategy, members of this team should be on a FAITH team.
- ***Discipleship.*** - Create an atmosphere that encourages believers to grow in maturity in Christ; monitor the discipleship needs of believers and work with the church's Discipleship director to provide learning opportunities focused to address these needs.
- ***Ministry.*** - Create an atmosphere in which members and prospects can experience direct care and concern for life's needs. And avenues through which they may identify and implement ministry and missions projects that utilize the gifts and abilities of class members; lead out in intercessory prayer as a integral ministry and missionary efforts of the class.

- ***Fellowship.*** - Create an atmosphere conducive to members building relationships with one another as together they build upon their relationship with God; lead actions that help new members be assimilated into the fellowship of the class and the team or group to which they are assigned.
- ***Worship.*** - Create a worshipful atmosphere, encourage participation in the church's corporate worship events, lead small-group worship experiences, and encourage personal worship in home and family settings.

The Participants, Class Members and guests: Primary Role

The people who attend Sunday School classes; departments; and other Bible study groups are not merely the intended recipients of Sunday School's ministry. They are the grassroots ministers.

Sunday School is concerned with building on-mission Christians. All of the class leaders, teachers, directors, ministers, and pastors leaders needed for now and in the future may be found on the membership or prospect list of Sunday School classes. Every participant should receive an opportunity to serve according to the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Such opportunities may be provided through their participation in Sunday School.

Major Responsibilities of Participants, Class Members

- Participate in personal and group Bible study regularly, giving attention to the leadership of the Holy Spirit.
- Be receptive to God's efforts to draw people to faith in Christ through His Word, His Spirit, and His people.
- Actively participate in efforts to lead others toward faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Participate individually and with the class to serve Christ through evangelism, discipleship, ministry, fellowship and ministry.
- Follow God's leadership in responding to opportunities to grow spiritually and to serve God's people in leadership roles.

Adapted from "Ten Best Practices," Kenneth Hemphill and Bill Taylor. Lifeway Christian Resources, 127 Ninth Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37234. Available from [Lifeway Stores](#).