



Teaching Plan for Adults:

Connect³: The Power of One Sunday School Class

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Purpose: To provide a two hour teaching experience for adult Sunday School leaders and members to identify specific ways to strengthen their Sunday School class.

How to use this plan

- For the local church: Use to train Adult Sunday School leaders and members during a local church training or kick-off event.
- For regional and state training: Use to train Adult Sunday School leaders and members in state or associational training events.

PREPARATION:

Provide the following resources for use throughout the training:

- Index cards for name tags. OPTION: Name tag template is provided in Connect³ Sunday School Launch Kit. For ordering information, visit www.lifeway.com/sskickoff or write LifeWay Church resources Customer Service, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0113, or FAX 1-615-251-5922. Provide one name tag for each participant.
- Marker pens
- Tape

Gather the following materials:

- Bibles for participants who do not bring their own, particularly if worksheets are not downloaded, copied and distributed
- Large sheets of paper

Download the following materials:

- *Connect³: The Power of One Sunday School Class*, by David Francis. For ordering information, visit www.lifeway.com/sskickoff or write LifeWay Church resources Customer Service, One LifeWay Plaza, Nashville, TN 37234-0113, or FAX 1-615-251-5922. Provide one copy for each participant.
- Powerpoint presentation: *Connect³: The Power of One Sunday School Class - Adults.ppt*
- Worksheets 1-5 that are part of this teaching plan

Make copies of the following worksheets, one for each participant:

- Worksheet 1: **Connect** to the Source
- Worksheet 2: Stay **connected** to someone who ...
- Worksheet 3: **Connect** the class with God's Word
- Worksheet 4: **Connected** as a Community of Ministers
- Worksheet 5: **Connect** as Commissioned Missionaries

Prepare a display of the following resources:

- *Connect³: The Power of One Sunday School Class*, by David Francis
- Sample of LifeWay Adult Sunday School resources, including Leader Packs, Leader Guides, and Learner Guides

Prepare the room for learning that helps adults connect:

- Arrange chairs in a semi-circle facing a focal wall.
- Place blank index cards, marking pens, and tape at or near chairs for participants to prepare their own name tag.
- Arrange AV equipment for PowerPoint presentation (screen, extension cord with multiple plug outlets), a large marker board with markers and eraser (or easel with large sheets of paper).
- Provide CD player and selected disk for background music (OPTIONAL).

PROCEDURES

Step 1: **Introduction, Get Acquainted; Why Connect?** (15 minutes)

As participants arrive, encourage participants to sit down and make a name tag by printing their name using a marker pen on an index card or on card printed from *Connect³ Launch Kit* (OPTIONAL). (**frame 1**) Provide background music on a CD player (OPTIONAL)

Welcome participants. Briefly overview that this training will help adult class leaders and members focus on how we can better connect to God and others through our Sunday School class. Explain that this builds on and is part of the three dimensions of a dynamic Sunday School: Invite, Discover, and Connect.

Distribute "**Connect** to the Source" (**Worksheet 1**). Lead participants to read Mark 1:7-14 by themselves. Lead participants to get in teams of two or three persons to discuss the following questions. (**frame 2**)

If all you knew about Jesus was based on Mark 1:7-14,

- What qualifies Jesus to lead a movement you would consider following?
- What expectations would you have if Jesus was leader in your class?

Emphasize the following: There are at least three reasons Jesus has the right to lead the work of your Sunday School class: **(frame 3)**

1. He connected completely with fulfilling prophecy about the Messiah. **(frame 4)**
2. He connected with the sinful people He came to redeem. **(frame 5)**
3. He connected us to be part of His Kingdom ministry. **(frame 6)**

Show pictures of seats in café with lap top. Include people sitting talking. **(frame 7)** Ask, "What are ways people today try to connect with other persons? What is your favorite way? What are challenges for you to get connected and stay connected with people?" Say, "This training will help us identify ways we can build a connection with others through our Sunday School class."

Ask the question: "If you understood the opportunity in your Sunday School is to help people connect to God, what is your role through your class?" **(frame 8)** Lead participants to brainstorm responses. Record responses on the marker board or large sheet of paper. Suggest that these become prayer requests.

Introduce the "Connect with Open Heart" icon. Call attention to the fact that one of the intentional strategies for every believer is to connect – through worship, prayer, fellowship, and as you relate to others in positive relationships both at work, in the home, and other settings. We are to connect with God, connect with others, and connect with church.

Lead in prayer asking God to lead us to help our class connect as He demonstrated through the work of His Son and our Savior.

Step 2 Who Needs Connecting? (10 minutes)

Remind participants that we are working with persons who have many remarkable life **challenges**, opportunities, gifts, and needs. Distribute "We are to **connect** with people who ..." **(Worksheet 2)**.

Lead participants to overview these brief scenarios. **(frame 9)** Invite participants to circle one of these that you identify with the most (or in which persons in your Sunday School class would relate to the most).

... have moved away from family and friends for school or job.

... seek to get connected with needs of children.

... just discovered a significant health crisis.

... are overwhelmed with work these days.

... looking for ways to keep the family connected.

... wonder why no one calls or visits except to ask for something.

... realize there will be mounting unforeseen challenges as a caregiver.

... are seeking to rebuild after a major a loss.

... are busier now than ever – for better or worse.

... _____ (List a category or issue not provided)

Lead participants to briefly list words or phrases that help you think about persons whose category they have circled. Explain that one of the significant opportunities of our Sunday School is to learn to know, love, and lead persons God places in our lives. Lead in a brief discussion of some of the needs and challenges faced by people in our Sunday School classes. Suggest that throughout the training, we will use this worksheet to help us focus on ways we can connect with these adults.

Step 3 Connect as Members of a Class (35 minutes)

Distribute copies of the book, *Connect³: The Power of One Sunday School Class*. (**frame 10**) Briefly explain that this book helps us focus on three aspects or levels of our assignment and opportunity through the Sunday School. Explain that you may identify one of these ways your class connects and would want to strengthen that aspect. Likewise, you may see opportunities to lead your class to expand in one or more aspects of your assignment.

This training and the book will help you: (**frame 11**)

1. Identify the level at which your class is currently functioning.
2. Discover ideas for operating in each level with greater meaning.
3. Decide if you want to move to a higher level or stay where you are.

Invite participants to glance through the book to get an idea of the three levels. Be prepared to confirm the three levels: Class, Community, and Commission. (**frame 12**)

Introduce the first “level.” The Sunday School class is to help people CONNECT as MEMBERS.

Distribute copies of **Worksheet 3: Connect** the Class with God’s Word. (**frame 13**) Invite participants to work by themselves to read through the list and write the letter or statement that best relates to or fits in either of the two categories. After participants have worked on this by themselves, be prepared to select several of these categories and lead discussion (based on information from the book and from personal experience) that helps adults determine how to strengthen these categories.

As you lead participants to overview ways to help people connect as members, encourage participants to discuss things they are doing that either make the aspect a strength or things that create a challenge in their class. Introduce the "GROW in Body Mind & Spirit" icon. Call attention to the fact that we are helping adults grow as we encounter and apply God's Word. Emphasize this as the strategy as we help connect the class with God's Word. Call attention to the Bible study resources available for Adults.

- a) Teacher directs work of the class (**frame 14a, b, c, d**)
 - Helps participants create interest, encounter God's Word, make application
 - Always seek balance between "going deep" and "being open"
 - Focus on the Great Confession
 - Kerygma*: understand, share, and defend the essence of the Good News
- b) Bible study is the center of our experience. (**frame 15a, b, c**)
 - Participants use Bible in class
 - Participants use curriculum resource to help study, discuss, and apply
 - Room looks like we want people to connect with God's Word (visuals, chair arrangement)
- c) Class is organized to stay in touch with members (**frame 16a, b, c**)
 - Class enrollment and attendance become important gages for us
 - Members talk about what they are learning
 - Members feel they belong to the group
- d) Class is open to newcomers (**frame 17a, b**)
 - Name tags are used so members know each other and so newcomers feel part of the group
 - We want not-yet believers to be enrolled

Say, "There are several ways we can look at our assignment to strengthen the class. One is to evaluate things from our perspective. Another is to look at the work of our class from the perspective of our members. Are we helping our members connect with God's Word?" Lead participants to review the list of persons from **Worksheet 2**, particularly the category chosen earlier. (**frame 18**) Lead participants to get in teams of 2-3 and discuss responses to the following question: What are some things I would need from a Sunday School class if you wanted me to be a member?

Step 4 Connect as Ministers (30 minutes)

Introduce the second level of your class assignment is to help members CONNECT as MINISTERS. (**frame 19**)

Introduce the "SERVE with willing hands" icon (from Connect Grow Serve Go). Emphasize that as adults connect with God and grow in an increased understanding and knowledge of God that comes through Bible study, we serve inside the church family. Encourage participants to help adults look for opportunities where they can serve by using their spiritual gifts, skill, and passions to glorify God.

Invite participants to read Acts 2:42-47. **(frame 20)** In teams of 2-3, lead participants to discuss actions and attitudes described in these verses that help you identify what a healthy class would do. After participants discuss in small groups, write the word, "community" on the marker board or large sheet of paper. Lead participants to share indicators in the passage that the group would be a community of faith. Record responses.

Distribute **Worksheet 4: Connected** as a Community of Ministers **(frame 21)**

Lead participants to read the following statements from *Connect³: The Power of One Sunday School Class*. Circle the statement which provides the greatest challenge for you and your class. Place a star (*) beside the statement you feel your class is learning to demonstrate or put this into action.

Our class enrollment is seen as our ministry list: we are committed to minister to our members.

Our class is a community of friends; we have to be intentional at staying open to new people.

Our class is intentional about helping members and prospects experience a Great Commandment community.

Our class is intentional about answering the question, "Has our class honored our commitment to this member?"

Our class is a place to go where "everybody knows your name."

Our class does the kinds of things you'd expect a community of faith to do; as it develops, it moves beyond just doing caring activities, and really starts caring.

Our class likes to have fun together.

Our class learns to bond in fellowship by doing ministry project(s) together.

Our class requires more leaders since we seek to help members connect through ministry and fellowship.

Our class is learning to pray for the challenges and victories of lives in our community.

Invite participants to get in teams of 3-4 persons. Lead participants to review the categories on **Worksheet 2. (frame 22)** Invite the team to imagine they are now a class comprised of themselves and three members described on that sheet. Each team is to identify which three persons from the worksheet are also in their class and list actions they would seek to do to help your class connect as a community. Distribute marker pens and large sheets of paper, one for each team.

As teams briefly report, emphasize concepts about building community that every class needs to demonstrate. (**frame 23a, b, c, d**)

We minister to our members

We fellowship with and pray for our members and prospects

We are organized to care for each other

We seek to connect members with the Great Commandment

Reveal the statement (**frame 24**): “Could it get any better than this? Actually, yes. If your class is willing to take the next step.” Remind participants that every class must work to help class members connect as members. Beyond that, classes will want to help members connect as ministers.

Step 5 Connect as Missionaries (25 minutes)

Introduce the third level of your class assignment. We are to help members CONNECT as MISSIONARIES. (**frame 25**)

Call attention to the “Go with Ready Feet” icon. Explain that one of our most significant strategies is to move outside the church. Say, “We will identify ways you can influence your class to go into your community and the world in the name of Christ.”

Distribute **Worksheet 5: Connect** as Commissioned Missionaries

Review that the class is to focus on *kerygma* – proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel. As a class grows into a community, it is to add an emphasis of *koinonia* – fellowship of faith. The next step is for a class to build on the other two as it demonstrates *kenosis* – which means “to empty.” Lead participants to write the phrase: “empty ourselves” in the blank on the sheet.

The class is to focus on *kerygma* – proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel. (**frame 26**)

As a class grows into a community, it is to add an emphasis of *koinonia* – fellowship of faith. (**frame 27**)

The next step is for a class to build on the other two as it demonstrates *kenosis* – which means “to empty”. (**frame 28**)

Call attention to the fact that Jesus demonstrated what we are to teach (Great Confession), who we are to teach (Great Commandment). He also demonstrated how we are to teach. Philippians 2:5-11 portrays what we are learning about Jesus. Lead participants to read the passage and underline words or phrases that help them identify examples Jesus



what Jesus is asking of us through our class.

Lead participants to record ideas for serving as a commissioned class. **(frame 30)**

1. Class members can release **(frame 31a, b, c, d)**
 - Sending missionaries to other classes
 - Associate members or members-in-service
 - "Here's a list of our missionaries"
 - "Our room is available for use"
2. Class members can reproduce **(frame 32a, b, c, d)**
 - Reproduce yourself – have an apprentice
 - Birth a new class
 - Need at least three people, prospects, passion, and place to meet
 - "Here's a picture of our family tree"
3. A class can go on mission **(frame 33a, b, c, d)**
 - Help every member find a ministry
 - Intentional outreach: build a prospect list; invite persons to enroll
 - Intentional evangelism: invite persons to trust Christ
 - Prayer is for unsaved; prayer is for missionaries

Lead participants to discuss some of the opportunities they have in leading their class to serve as a commissioned class. **(frame 34)** Invite participants to brainstorm some challenges or obstacles they face in helping their class at this level.

Step 6 Commissioned to Connect **(5 minutes)**

Remind participants that God has called you to be part of a remarkable Kingdom assignment. Jesus models for us as we seek to focus on proclaiming the Good News of the Gospel, building a community of faith, and sending out missionaries. No matter which "level" our class is, we can strengthen, stretch, and stabilize. David Francis emphasizes that prayer is a vital part of the life of a class – no matter at which level they are participating. Lead participants to read the final section "Prayer at the Commission Level" (pages 42-43). **(frame 35)**

Invite participants to take their name tag and on the back write the name of at least one person who is a missionary from their class. **(frame 36)** Then, lead participants to write the name of at least one unsaved person for whom they will pray. Invite participants to pray together that God will demonstrate His power and passion as He works through us as we help people connect with God's Word, a fellowship of faith, and with God's commission for us. Lead participants to place their name tags in their Bible as a reminder of their commitments and opportunities.

