

Conference Outline for Children's Sunday School Leadership

2 hours

PURPOSE

To lead Children's Sunday School leaders to discover the importance connecting to God's Word, connecting to one another, and connecting to others through Sunday morning Bible study.



PREPARATION

1. Make three large circles out of colored poster board. On one circle, write **"Connect to God's Word,"** on the second, **"Connect to One Another,"** and on the third write, **"Connect to Others."**
2. Secure game chips in three colors. (Option: create colored circles in three different colors of poster board. Make one for each conferee.)
3. Copy and cut out one **"Connect with a couple friends!"** (Handout 1) for each conferee.
4. Make copies of handouts 2, 3, and 4 for each conferee.
5. Write these three statements on three different pieces of construction paper (12" each): **Ask Good Questions, Provide Life Application, Make Children Accountable.** Secure a sturdy 36" yardstick on which to tape these statements.
6. Write the following statements on colored sentence strips. Make the first phrase of the statement on one color, the second on another and the third on another color. Place these around the room: **1) Share/mutual/interests; 2) Understand/the children/you teach; 3) Do/kind/deeds; 4) Participate in/happy/times; 5) Telephone/often/or as needed; 6) Be a good/listener/without judging; 7) Minister/in times/of need; 8) Provide/a feeling of security/for the family; 9) Know/the spiritual needs/of family members; 10) Show/respect for the/family; 11) Remember/the child's name/and use it often; 12) Give/sincere/compliments; 13) Pray/with a/purpose; 14) Offer to enroll/family members in/Sunday School.**
7. On separate index cards, write the statements found on the grid of handout 4. Place cards in a small gift bag.

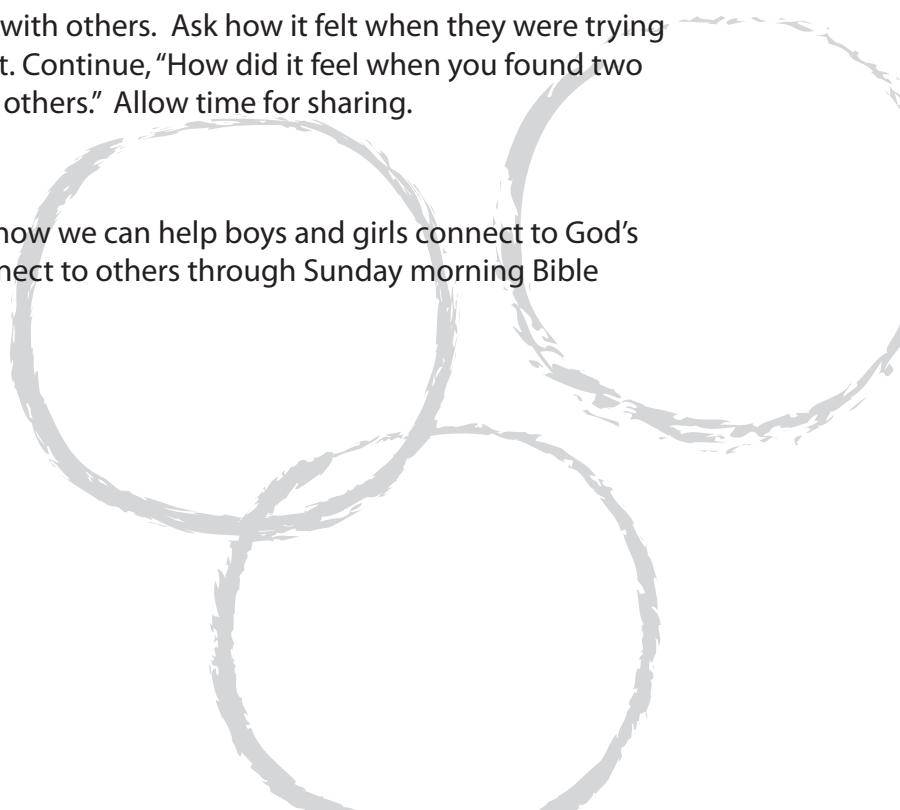
8. From construction paper cut several 1 x 9" strips. Provide a marker and stapler for each group.
9. Number 20 sheets of heavy weight paper. On the back write one of the following question: **1. Name one Bible concept area. 2. Name one of the Bible stories being taught this coming year. 3. What is one way you can help provide accountability during the week for a child? 4. What is one way we can help children apply God's Word to their life? 5. How do good questions help a teacher where a child is spiritually? 6. How do nametags help create a "level playing field" on Sunday morning? 7. How can teachers follow up with guests on Sunday? 8. How can a teacher help provide a feeling of security for the family? 9. Name a kind deed a teacher can do for a child. 10. What can a teacher do to help understand today's child? 11. What are some mutual interests a child and a teacher might share? 12. Name a way email can be used effectively with parents?** Place the questions, number side up, into the **Giant Game Floor Mat®**. (Option: If you do not have access to a **Giant Game Floor Mat®** you can create a grid by placing the question, number side up, in a 4 x 5 grid arrangement on the floor.
10. Secure several sheets of three different colors of construction paper.

PROCEDURES

Introduction-Get Acquainted As conferees enter the room, ask them to begin working on handout 1. At the appropriate time welcome conferees and ask them to introduce themselves to another conferee and share their answers from the handout. If they have a common answer to one of the questions, ask them to link arms and then find another conferee that has a same answer as they have, linking to make a group of three.

Congratulate conferees on connecting with others. Ask how it felt when they were trying to find someone with whom to connect. Continue, "How did it feel when you found two partners and you were connected with others." Allow time for sharing.

Say, "Today we are going to talk about how we can help boys and girls connect to God's Word, connect to one another and connect to others through Sunday morning Bible Study."



Connect to God's Word

Three Way Match Place the "Connect to God's Word" circle (prep step 1) on the focal wall. Show conferees the Scope and Sequence Bible content that children will be learning during 2009-2010 (This can be found at www.lifeway.com/kids). Guide conferees to look at the Scripture passages, Bible stories, and the Concept areas for the year. Discuss the importance of learning the Bible stories and verses.

Say, "Learning the Bible content is important but it is also important for kids to understand how the Bible content relates to their daily life." Lead conferees to consider the life application statements. Ask how these statements can help teachers relate Bible content to a child's life.



Give each conferee a game chip (prep step 2) and have them group themselves in groups of three, each having the same colored chips (ex: 3 blues, 3 reds, 3 whites). Distribute handout 2 and allow groups time to connect the matching "Bible Story," "Bible Truth," and "Life Application." After conferees have had time to complete the sheet encourage them to share their responses. Correct matches are: **1. David and Goliath-God's power gives courage to stand against wrong-I can trust God to give me courage to stand for what is right; 2. Three Friends in a Fire-God has power over fear-When I am afraid, I can trust God; 3. The Writing on the Wall-God gives wisdom and understanding-I can depend on God for wisdom and understanding; 4. Daniel and the Lions-God's power protects-I can trust God's protection; 5. Jonah Preached-God cares for people-I can thank God for caring for me.**

Measuring Connectedness The goal of Bible study regardless of age is for pupils to grow in their walk with Christ. The following three guidelines will help teachers measure how their pupils are doing as they connect God's Word to their life. Place the cards you have made on the yardstick as you discuss each one.

- 1. Ask good questions.** Good questions help teachers determine where a child is spiritually and if they are making the correlation between the Bible story and life. They also help children apply principles to life.
- 2. Provide Life Application.** Give children an opportunity to apply the life application and the Bible truth from the session to their lives. Let the Bible content translate into action.
- 3. Make Children Accountable.** Hold children accountable for living out the truths they have learned during a Bible study session. Follow up throughout the week. Encourage and pray for the kids you teach.

Ask conferees to write down 3 things they can do next week to help determine if children are connecting to God's Word.

Connect to One Another

Place the "Connecting to One Another" Circle on to the board beside of the first one.

Match Three: When Teaching Becomes Ministry Teaching children is not just about the delivery of Bible content to children. Teaching children involves a much larger aspect: building relationships.

Ask conferees to recall a favorite teacher from their childhood. Ask, "Do you remember what that teacher taught you?" Most will not remember specific information they learned from the teacher, but they will remember a connection that teacher made with them. It might have been a special card, hug, visit, or word of encouragement. In most cases it's not the content one remembers but rather the relationship.

Ask conferees to group themselves in threes with each person having a different color chip. As they link arms with one another (making a chain of three), have them collect three sentence strip pieces (one of each color) to make a complete statement. After groups have collected their statements, allow them to share their statement with the group. Briefly discuss each statement. Utilize Handout 3 to record their answers and comments.

Three in a Row Give conferees a copy of Handout 4. Ask conferees to think back over the previous year and the different ways they built relationships with the children in their class. Share that listed on the handout are different ways one might build relationships with kids. These same ideas have been printed on index cards and have been placed in the bag. Share that you will pull a card; if a conferee has done that suggested relationship building idea in the past year they are to place a check mark in that square. The first person to have three checked boxes in a row (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally) is the winner. As you pull from the bag, comment on these ministry opportunities and any other ideas that are generated by the conferees. Play until all the relationship building squares have been discussed. **Note: there are two "Your Choice" spaces. Should you pull a "Your Choice" card, conferees who share a relationship building idea that they have used or plan to use in the coming year may place a check in either of the "Your Choice" boxes.**

Lead conferees in a prayer asking God to bless their efforts as they build relationships with children and their families.



Connect to Others

Place the “Connecting to Others” circle on the board beside of the other two. The colored circles should now be three in a row either in a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal line.

Write Three Say, “Reaching children begins when a child comes to the department door and continues throughout the week. Children are often at different levels of Bible knowledge, maturity and experience. Often times this can present a challenge to teachers who strive to create a positive learning experience. Creating a ‘level playing field’ for each child can be challenging.”

Ask conferees to re-group themselves into new groups of three. Give each group a different color of construction paper. Lead groups to discuss what teachers can do to help create a positive learning environment for all kids. Instruct conferees to list three ideas and then pass their sheet to the group to their right. Guide groups to read the ideas listed then add three additional ideas not mentioned on that sheet. After each group has written on each sheet, invite groups to share the ideas on their original sheet. Ideas might include: ***Make name tags for everyone, not just guests. Enlist someone to greet people at the door. Make registration simple. Provide a sticker, small gift, etc. to visitors. Introduce the guest to someone who attends the same school as themselves. Develop a buddy system in which the “greeter” stays with the guest throughout the session. Involve guests early in to the class through group projects and activities. Deliver information to a guest’s home. Email parents. Provide information on children’s programs to the parent. Inform parents regarding procedures within the children’s ministry.***

Chain Reaction There are many different ways to reach and minister to children who do not attend your church. Create three teams of equal number. Give each team strips of paper, markers, and a stapler (prep step 8). Ask conferees to write down one way to reach or minister to a child that does not attend church on a regular basis on one strip of paper. Make a loop and staple the paper together forming a chain link. Challenge the groups to brainstorm as many ideas as they can to discover which group can make the longest chain.

After 5-10 minutes, allow each group to share their ideas. Measure the chains of each group to declare a winning team.

Connect 3 Floor Game Ask conferees to form three new teams according to like colored game chips (i.e. all blue chips, all red chips, all white chips). Provide each team with matching colored construction paper (i.e. red chips = red construction paper; blue chips = blue construction paper). Start the game by allowing team one to choose a number from the game board. Once chosen, turn that number over to reveal a question. If team one answers the question correctly, they then mark that spot with their team’s colored



construction paper. Team two goes next followed by team three. Continue until a team is able to get three in a row (horizontally, diagonally or vertically) and all the questions have been answered.

Closing Ask conferees to regroup with the original three conferees from the beginning of the conference. Let each conferee share a prayer request related to connecting. Read Matthew 18:20 and close in prayer.