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**All Leaders Together Conference Plans**

**Purpose:** This conference plan details a conference experience for all Sunday School and small-group leaders. The goal is to provide an overview of the book *Stand Up* and to apply its content to the Bible study setting of conference participants.

The plans can be used as one 2.5 hour session (with breaks) or as three 45-minute sessions (one 45-minute session for each chapter). If you choose three 45-minute sessions, you may lead the sessions over 3 consecutive weeks or use the plans during quarterly leadership meetings, with one session each for three consecutive months.

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**General Preparation**

* Secure copies of *Saddle Up: Leading Your Groups with Purpose, Posture, & Preparedness* by Ken Braddy, Michael Kelley, and Dwayne McCrary, one for each participant (The book can be ordered at *LifeWay.com/TrainingResources* or you can download for free the PDF version.*)*
* Pray for yourself, for participants, and for members and prospects through your Sunday School.

**Conference Segment 1: Purpose**

**Specific Preparation**

* Arrange room so participants are seated in semi circle(s) facing a focal wall.
* Provide name tags for participants along with makers to write their name.
* Make copies of note taking sheet, “Wins for our Sunday School.”
* Secure objects to be used during the conference (for example: football, extension cord, Bible, open can or jar, and hat or jersey of a local sports team or school).
* OPTIONAL: Review PowerPoint® presentation, adjusting as needed. Secure data projector.

**Conference Plans**

Arrival /Introduction

1. Welcome participants, inviting everyone to make a name tag and then share with others one thing you like about your church.
2. After most have arrived, explain that the church has a kingdom strategy designed to help make disciples. This strategy is built on teaching God’s Word, reaching people, and ministering.
3. Distribute copies of *Saddle Up*, one for each participant. Lead in prayer, asking that God will use this time to strengthen our focus on the purpose, posture, and preparedness needed to effectively teach, reach, and minister.

Examine

1. Call attention to a football. Say: *Vince Lombardi was a champion as a professional football coach. Among other things, he is well remembered at holding up a football to his experienced players and saying, ‘this is a football.’ He emphasized the fundamentals of the game and indicated that by focusing on those basics of passing, tackling, and blocking, the team would be champions. And they were.* Explain that in Sunday School, there are several fundamentals that we will continually champion: teaching, reaching, and ministering.
2. Call attention to the top of page 10 in *Saddle Up*. Direct participants to record how they would finish the statement on the page (The purpose of Sunday School is). Emphasize that during this conference, they will have time to evaluate their statement and adjust it if needed.
3. Distribute copies of “Wins for our Sunday School” note taking sheet. Lead participants to fill in blanks and discuss implications for these wins in our Sunday School. Use the various items collected to reinforce each win.
4. (Extension Cord) Every believer will be on the receiving end and the giving end of disciple making.
5. (Bible) We will help every person encounter God through His Word.
6. (Open can or jar) We will get people involved in Bible study by actively enrolling individuals into a group that expects and engages new people.
7. (Hat or jersey of local team) We enlist and train a team of leaders for each group who intentionally focus on the fundamentals of Sunday School.

Clarify as needed using information found in *Saddle Up*. After each point is presented, invite volunteers to brainstorm implications of that statement relative to Sunday School.

1. Explain that various sections in *Stand Out* can give us more ideas to add to our implications. Assign each section to an individual or team: Inherent in Making Disciples is Change (*Stand Up*, p. 12-13), Sunday School is Foundational Discipleship (*Saddle Up*, pp. 14-16), Making Disciples Means Openly Enrolling Them (*Saddle Up*, pp. 16-17), and Principles for Making Disciples (*Saddle Up*, pp. 18-20).

Direct each person or team to review their assigned pages, looking for ideas and statements that add to the implications already shared. After allowing time for them to review the content, call for each person or a representative to share insights they gained.

Next Steps

1. Direct participants to review the purpose statement they recorded on page 10 earlier during the conference. Invite them to adjust their purpose statement based on insights gained during the conference. Allow one or two volunteers to share. Close in prayer, asking God to help each person become more aware of their responsibility of making disciples.

**Conference Segment 2: Posture**

**Specific Preparation**

* Arrange room so participants are seated in semi circle(s) facing a focal wall.
* Provide name tags for participants along with makers to write their name.
* Enlist one or more participants to prepare an overview of pages 33-38.
* Make copies of note taking sheets:
* ABIDE acrostic
* When We Pray

**Conference Plans**

Arrival /Introduction

1. As conferees arrive, invite them to share advice given to them about posture. Emphasize the role posture has on doing an activity such as weightlifting or running. Explain that Michael Kelley identified three “postures” for Sunday School leaders in chapter 2: Abiding, Kneeling, and Serving. Note that this conference will focus on these three postures.

Examine

1. Distribute copies of the “ABIDE acrostic” note taking sheet. Lead participants to fill in the blanks as you describe the importance of each statement.

Emphasize the following:

A – Actions that reflect a growing faith

A believer’s actions should consistently demonstrate a growing understanding of God’s character.

B – Basic work of the Christian life (branch cannot survive apart from vine); bear fruit

Believers are to demonstrate Christian character and lead others to Christ

I – Identity of Jesus in and through us

Maturity is seen in a growing Christ-like character

D – Discipleship; disciplines of a follower of Christ

Abiding includes placing ourselves in a position to more readily hear from God.

E – Encountering Jesus, not merely learning about Him

Believers follow Christ with their full being.

Invite participants to identify Bible passages that support each statement (ex: Romans. 12:1-2, James 1:22-24, Galatians 5:20-26, Matthew 4:19, Matthew 19:16-22).

1. Identify the second POSTURE: Kneeling. Distribute copies of the “When We Pray” statements. Assign each statement to four participants. Once each statement has been assigned direct the remaining conferees to join one of the people with assigned statements. Lead participants to follow the directions given on the handout, reading the selected pages and discussing implications of their assigned statement regarding prayer in and through their group. Invite volunteers to share with the group insights gained.
2. Introduce the POSTURE of service by writing the following statement on a board or large sheet of paper: God passionately loves the people in our groups; our attending members, our absentee members, our prospects. Therefore, we ought to love them and demonstrate that love through service.

Lead participants to read the statement and discuss ways of demonstrating a posture of service with each of the three lists of people.

1. Enlist one or more participants ahead of time to overview pages 33-38 and be prepared to briefly report on the following concepts:

* What do we have to offer by serving others?
* What does service costs us?
* In what ways does our posture of service extend beyond those who are most easy and familiar to serve?

Ask: *How would God evaluate and instruct us regarding service? What role does service play in setting the example for our group?*

Next Steps

1. Remind the conferees of the three postures: Abiding, Kneeling, and Serving. Challenge them to consider one action they need to take to improve their posture in each of these three areas. Direct them to record the actions they identified in the notes section in the back of their copy of *Saddle Up*. Close in prayer.

**Conference Segment 3: Preparedness and Challenge**

**Specific Preparation**

* Arrange room so participants are seated in semi circle(s) facing a focal wall.
* Provide name tags for participants along with makers to write their name.
* Make copies of note taking sheet “Questions We Must Answer.”
* Secure copies of Sunday School curriculum used in your church.
* Provide two colors of index cards, 4-5 cards for each participant

**Conference Plans**

Arrival /Introduction

1. As conferees arrive, call attention to the following statement you have written on a board: preparation overcomes ability alone. Invite volunteers to share their level of agreement with that statement.
2. Explain that this conference will focus on the preparation required to lead our classes well. Emphasize preparing personally, preparing the room, and preparing for the Bible study experience.

Examine

1. Distribute copies of “Questions We Must Answer” and present an overview of the five questions that need to be answered each time a person leads a Bible study group (pages 40-46, *Saddle Up*). Provide copies of the Bible study resources/curriculum for each age group represented. Direct individuals or teams (by age-grouping) to identify how each question is answered within their curriculum resources. Invite participants to briefly report.
2. Lead participants to discuss ways of strengthening the way one prepares each week to lead a class or group. Point them to the content in *Saddle Up* for ideas.
3. Call attention to the need and opportunity to prepare our groups to serve. Direct participants to examine the list of actions created by the men’s class on page 49 of *Saddle Up*. Lead the participants to offer additions or changes to the actions listed. Guide the group to identify the items on the list that relate to service in some way. Emphasize the importance of the leader setting the standard when it comes to serving others.
4. Call attention to the last action on the list (Looks for ways of sending people out to start a new group, strengthens an existing group, or sponsors a new group). Lead the group to identify actions that could be taken to start, strengthen or sponsor a new group. Challenge them to lead their groups to pray regularly about their role in starting new groups.

Next Steps

1. Direct participants to read the CHALLENGE on pages 55-56 of *Saddle Up*. Distribute two colors of blank index cards to each participant. On one color of card, invite participants to write the name of persons who have demonstrated the purpose, posture, and/or preparations for them. On the other color of card, invite participants to write specific names of persons (members and prospects for their group) they pray will see purpose, posture, and/or preparedness demonstrated in their life. Invite participants to keep these cards as a reminder of our need and opportunity to “saddle up.”
2. Invite participants to pray that we will strengthen our purpose, our posture, and our preparedness in making disciples through groups.