

Missionary Sunday School: Conference Plan for Student Leaders

Prepared by:

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Purpose: To provide a two-hour teaching experience for Student Sunday School leaders and members for the purpose of identifying and implementing a strategy for becoming a Missionary Sunday School class.

How to use this plan

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

PREPARE:

Provide the following resources for use throughout the training:

- Nametag for each participant (A nametag template is provided in the zip files for this *2012 Missionary Sunday School Emphasis Kit*.)
- Paper, pens, and an index card for each participant
- Student Handout 1: The History of His Story
- Student Handout 2: Measuring Up
- Student Handout 3: Target Teens

Download the following materials:

- Provide one copy of *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis for each participant. The book is available as a free download or you can purchase copies for \$1.50 each at www.lifeway.com/davidfrancis. The book can also be purchased at the Apple iStore.
- PowerPoint presentation: Missionary Sunday School—Student.ppt

Prepare a display of the following resources:

- *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis
- *Transformational Class: Transformational Church Goes to Sunday School* by David Francis
- Samples of LifeWay Student Sunday School resources (KNOWN, Life Focus, FUEL, *Living with Teenagers*, *Essential Connection*, etc.)

Prepare the room for learning:

- Arrange chairs in three semicircles facing the PowerPoint screen or a markerboard in front of the room.
- Place a nametag on each chair and provide pens in the center of each semi-circle.
- Secure a markerboard with markers/eraser and CD player with CD of music for worship. Arrange for AV equipment facing the focal wall if you will use the optional PowerPoint (computer loaded with PowerPoint presentation, data projector, extension cord with power cord, screen for projection).
- Reproduce handouts, one copy of the three handouts for each participant expected.
- Provide three large sheets of paper with markers.



- Record the names of the missionaries listed in Step 1 on a large sheet of paper and display the paper at the front of the room.
- Provide a hat and 24 cards with one letter of the alphabet (except X and Z) on each card (Step 5).

PRESENT:

1. INTRODUCTION (20 min.)

[SLIDE 1]

Lead the participants to print their names on the nametags in their chairs using a thick marker. Begin by directing the participants' attention to the group of names you have written on a large piece of paper in the front of the room. Call on volunteers to identify what each person is known for in history.

[SLIDE 2]

Names should include missionaries such as: Boniface (eighth century missionary to Germanic pagans), David Brainerd (American Missionary to Native Americans), John and Charles Wesley (American Colonies), Samuel Mills (Student leader of international missions in America – Haystack prayer meeting), Annie Armstrong (instrumental in the founding of Women's Missionary Union), Lottie Moon (China), Lott Carey (Liberia), Hudson Taylor (India), Apostle Paul (Italy, Asia, Greece), Cameron Townsend (Wycliffe Bible Translators), Adoniram Judson (India), Luther Rice (missions fundraiser), Jim Elliot (Ecuador), and William Carey (Father of Modern Missions, India), etc. Also include on the list Robert Raikes, Bishop William White, and Stephen Paxson.

Ask: *What do all these folks have in common?* (They are all missionaries or missions advocates). Be ready to explain why these last three names are especially significant for this study.

[SLIDE 3]

Display *Transformational Class: Transformational Church Goes to Sunday School* by David Francis. Point out that this book attempted to suggest some answers to the question: *What might a Sunday School class or small group look like if it demonstrated the seven elements found in Transformational Churches?* (The seven elements are: Missionary Mentality; Vibrant Leadership; Relational Intentionality; Prayerful Dependence; Worship; Community; and Mission.) In this book the focus is on just one of those elements: Missionary Mentality.

[SLIDE 4]

Ask leaders: *What does it mean to live your life on mission? Why is it important for Sunday School to be on mission? What might a Sunday School look like if it saw itself as a missionary enterprise: thinking and acting out of a missionary mindset?* Explain that the training today is designed to identify and implement a strategy for becoming a missionary Sunday School class. Point out that *Missionary Sunday School* is based on three big ideas:

- (1) The One Mission that runs throughout the incredible story of the Sunday School movement is transformation (personal, church-wide, and cultural);
- (2) The stack pole for the missionary Sunday School is His Story and the textbook is the Bible; and
- (3) Every person at every age and stage of life should study the Bible for all of his or her lives.

[SLIDE 5]

2. A HISTORY OF TRANSFORMATION (30 min.)

Distribute copies of *Missionary Sunday School* by David Francis to every leader. Point out that each of the semi-circles represents a team. Direct each group to be prepared to summarize their part of Chapter 1—*One Mission: Transformation* under the following headings: *More Than A Program—From Social Gospel to Social Evangelism* (pp. 8-11); *The Missionary Valley Enterprise—A Horse Named Robert Raikes* (pp. 12-15); *Books and Libraries—From History to His Story* (pp. 15-20). Distribute large sheets of paper and markers for the teams to record their findings. Encourage the teams to be creative as possible in presenting their information. They can summarize in a news report, by illustration, song, drama, etc.

[SLIDE 6]

Also distribute Student Handout 1: The History of His Story to each person. Point out that the History of Sunday School can best be summarized by being transformational, for individuals, for churches, and for the culture surrounding those churches.

As each group makes its presentation, write the title of the session on a large sheet of paper or markerboard. After the presentations, encourage each group to develop a list as to why Sunday Schools today tend to be less missional and/or less transformational than history suggests they used to be. After a few minutes, call on each group to share their list. Challenge each leader to read silently and work through the reflection questions at the end of Chapter One (p. 21).

3. THE ROAD TO MISSIONS (20 min.)

Discuss the basic steps of missionary training as pointed out in *Missionary Sunday School*:

- Step 1: Utilize Bible study to equip the missionaries.
- Step 2: Provide basic training to help the appointees acknowledge, affirm, and embrace their identities as missionaries.
- Step 3: Equip the missionaries to communicate the Bible—His Story—in the language of the people being reached (in this case, students, and different student people groups).
- Step 4: Develop a Bible study plan for all of life (LifeSpan).

[SLIDE 7]

Direct conferees to remain in three groups. Challenge the leaders to develop a plan for studying God's Word that enables students to look at the whole counsel of God's Word in a realistic and fair time frame. Also lead them to determine what steps they may need to determine in order to prepare students in their classes to become missionaries. Distribute paper and pens for them to write their plans and make their lists. After a few minutes, call on volunteers to share their plans and lists.

4. THE GREAT DEBATE (20 min.)

Lead participants to count off (one, two, one, two, etc.). Challenge the two teams to take a few minutes to prepare for a debate. Team 1 will make the argument: Nurturing is the main focus of a Sunday School class (D-groups or closed groups). Group 2 will make the argument: Evangelism is the main focus of a Sunday School Class (open groups).

Point out that they can use the information in *Missionary Sunday School* (pp. 26-28) to help in their presentation. After about 5 minutes of prep time, direct Team 1 to make their arguments within two minutes. Then direct Team 2 to make their arguments within two minutes. When both teams have presented their arguments, direct Team 2 to make their rebuttal within one minute and then Team 1 to make their rebuttal within one minute.

After the debate, point out that both kinds of Bible study classes are essential aspects of a growing body of believers. It is imperative, however, that there be at least one small group for every person so effective Missionary Sunday Schools must lean toward the open group focus.

Take a few minutes and identify the characteristics of the Open Group and the D-Group (Closed Group) on a large sheet of paper in front of the class or on a markerboard.

- Open Groups: systematic study plan that engages students in the whole message of the Bible, open to both lost and saved students as well as students who may be inconsistent in attendance; ongoing Bible study plan; low level of commitment and accountability; foundational discipleship.
- D-Groups: Specific study plan that addresses important discipleship emphases; designed more for the saved and growing student; Short term plan Bible study plan that lasts 4-8 weeks; high level of commitment and accountability; advanced discipleship.

[SLIDE 8]

Distribute Student Handout 2: Measuring Up. Challenge the participants to rate their classes on the three elements of Bible study. Underneath the scales, lead the participants to list things they can do to improve (move closer to the left) the ratings for their class. If time permits, call on volunteers to share their answers.

5. TARGET PRACTICE (20 min.)

While keeping the participants in the same two teams as the previous step, lead them to play a brief game of *Scattergories*®. Direct each team to work together to determine a list of student people groups that begin with a letter in the alphabet. To determine letter you can either use the 20-sided letter die that is a part of the real Hasbro game or place all 24 letters (excluding X and Z) in a hat and draw out a letter. Give the teams three minutes to complete their lists. Add up the number of points each people group identified that the other team did not identify. If the people group they listed is made up of two words and both begin with the determined letter, the team gets 10 points. Play two or three rounds of the game using different letters. Total the number of points for each team to determine a winner.

Point out that every person in every age group, social group, socio-economic group, neighborhood, and ethnic group needs to have a Bible study group for him or her. Our mission is to identify the student people groups God has called us to reach, get to know them, discover the geo-social context, and the location in which your student people group congregates or lives.

6. CONCLUSION (10 min.)

Distribute Student Handout 3: Target Teens to each participant. Direct the individuals from the same Sunday School class, department, or church to spend some time identifying student people groups they can begin to reach out to and enable them to intersect with Bible study. Challenge them to develop an organizational plan and timeline to begin missionary Sunday Schools designed to target these people groups. Encourage them to utilize the “Tools of the Missionary Sunday School” section in the Appendix to develop their own lists of tools to reach the students in their community.

If time permits, call on volunteers to share their people groups, organizational plans, and tools for their missionary efforts. Remind the leaders that ultimately the students' religious education is the responsibility of the parents. Encourage the participants to keep in mind options for equipping parents to this biblical process. Challenge them to ignite their Sunday Schools for One Mission, fueled by His Story, concerned about Every Person.

[SLIDE 9]

Distribute an index card to each participant. Direct them to write down several prayer requests related to what they have learned during the session. Challenge them to carry this card with them for at least one month to remind them to pray for God's leadership in their mission.

Lead the class, department, and/or church groups to spend a few minutes in prayer as God leads them to become His instruments in their communities. After a few minutes close the group in a prayer of commitment that we will be available to live our lives on mission to reach students.