

Transformational Class: Transformational Church Goes to Sunday School Teaching Plan for General Sunday School Leadership or All Sunday School Leaders

Prepared by:

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Purpose: To provide a two-hour teaching experience for: 1) general Sunday School leaders (Sunday School directors, pastors, and ministers of education), 2) all Sunday School leaders taught in one group, or 3) all church members and Sunday School leaders in one group. The purpose of the training is identifying and implementing a strategy for becoming a Transformational Sunday School class.

How to use this plan

- For the local church: Use to train general Sunday School leaders (Sunday School directors, pastors, and ministers of education), all Sunday School leaders, or all church members during a local church training or kick-off event.
- For regional and state training: Use to train general Sunday School leaders (Sunday School directors, pastors, and ministers of education) in state or associational training events.

PREPARATION

Provide the following resources for use throughout the training:

- Nametag for each participant. (A nametag template is provided on the CD-Rom in the *Sunday School Emphasis Kit*.)
- General Leader Handouts: five handouts, one per conferee
- Assignments (available on the PowerPoint® [slides 70-72])
 - Group Assignments: Vibrant Leadership (one for each anticipated group of four)
 - Case Study: Worship (two or four copies, depending on number of groups in step 6)
 - Group Assignments: Worship (three or six copies, depending on number of groups in step 8)

Download the following materials:

- Provide one copy of *Transformational Class: Transformational Church Goes to Sunday School* by David Francis for each participant. The book is available three ways: 1) Print copies from the file provided on this CD-Rom. 2) Download the file from www.LifeWay.com/SundaySchool and make copies. 3) Order copies for \$1.50 each at www.LifeWay.com/SundaySchool.
- PowerPoint® presentation: Transformational Class: Transformational Church Goes to Sunday School—General Leaders or All Leaders Together.ppt

Prepare a display of the following resources:

- *Transformational Class: Transformational Church Goes to Sunday School* by David Francis
- Sample of LifeWay Sunday School resources
- *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations* by Ed Stetzer and Thom S. Rainer

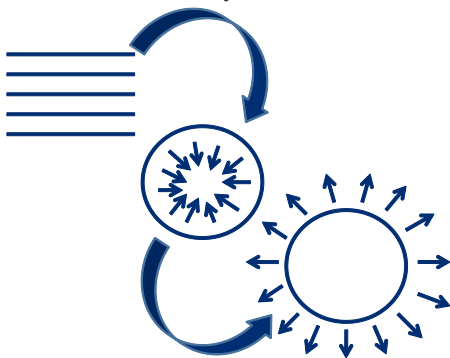
Prepare the room for learning:

- Arrange chairs in groups of four to six with a tear sheet in the center of each group.
- Place a copy of Handout 1: Introductory Activity and a nametag in each chair.
- If you plan to use the PowerPoint® that accompanies this conference plan, arrange for a data projector, computer, and screen or projectable wall.

PROCEDURES:

1. INTRODUCTION (15 min.)

- a) Arrange chairs into groups of four to six people. Place a tear sheet in the center of each group. Place a copy of Handout 1: Introductory Activity in every chair. Display the following instructions at the front of the room [slide 2]: *Based on Romans 12:2, list five traits you believe should characterize a transformational class. What would happen in your church if every Sunday School class were transformational?* As the participants enter, ask them to complete their nametag and complete the introductory activity as a group.
- b) Welcome the participants. State that across North America, churches are being impacted by the research in the book *Transformational Church: Creating a New Scorecard for Congregations*. In the book, *Transformational Class: Transformational Church Goes to Sunday School*, David Francis has taken that research and helped us look in a practical way at what that research and the principles discovered mean to a Sunday School class and a Sunday School as a whole.
- c) State that the Transformational Church research found three principles that described transformational churches. They transform: 1) people to look like Christ, 2) congregations to act like the body of Christ, and 3) communities to reflect the kingdom of Christ. Point out the three groups transformed: people, congregations, and communities. Point out the three actions: look like, act like, and reflect. Point out the result of that transformation: like Christ, like the body of Christ, and reflect the kingdom of Christ. [slide 3]
- d) Ask the groups to share their answers to the opening activity question. [slide 2]
- e) State that the Transformational Church research discovered seven elements that fall into three categories. Those seven elements are called the Transformational Loop. The purpose of the *Transformational Class* is to help us understand what a Sunday School class would look like if it demonstrated the seven elements found in transformational churches. Each chapter will deal with one of the seven elements. [slide 4]
- f) Display slide 5 or reproduce the diagram below on a marker board or tear sheet. Ask the participants to read the section “Missional Small Communities” on page 6 and determine what they think the symbols in the diagram represent. After they have had time to read the section, ask for their response. Explain that missional small communities (missional Sunday School classes) move people “out of rows, into circles, and from those circles, engage them in missional activity in their communities and beyond.” [slide 5]



- g) State that it would be wonderful if every class in the church became transformational, but it comes down to class members and leaders deciding what kind of group they want to become. There is power in each class. Each class can decide to intentionally accomplish the “3 Rs:” reach people for Christ, release people to serve, and reproduce itself for Kingdom impact. [slides 6-8]

2. Missionary Mentality (15 min.)

- a) Refer to the diagram on page 9 and state that the first of the seven elements of a transformational church and class you will explore is Missionary Mentality. [slide 9]
- b) Read the following quote from page 9: “It takes another level of commitment to prayerfully and intentionally make it your mission to reach out to others within that context.” Emphasize the importance of discerning the cultural and socioeconomic context of the church and then intentionally trying to reach the people within that context. Emphasize how a class can make that its mission. [slide 10]
- c) State that Sunday School actually started as a school on Sunday for the children of the working class poor to help them learn how to read and write. Tell the story of the beginning of Sunday School movement (pages 10-11). [slide 11]
- d) Read this quote from page 12: “The basic idea behind missionary strategy is to establish—with as much clarity and specificity as possible—who it is you want to reach.” Emphasize the importance of a Sunday School class making a clear commitment to reach a specific target group. [slide 12]
- e) Ask participants to remain in their groups and complete this assignment: 1) Identify the cultural context of the churches represented in your group. 2) List the various people groups represented in the context of your churches. 3) List ways you can go about better discovering the people groups in your church area (Handout 2: Missionary Mentality). [slide 13]
- f) Call for brief reports from the above activity.
- g) State: *The time-tested model for identifying the people group target for classes is the age-graded Sunday School.* Emphasize that age-grading is still valid for identifying the target people groups for adult classes. [slide 14]
- h) State that while age-grading remains a viable method for identifying the target people group for adult classes, there are other options including: 1) life-stage, 2) affinity group, and 3) specific neighborhood. Briefly explain each of these three options. [slide 15]
- i) Conclude the chapter on missionary mentality with the following quote from page 14: “I’ve become convicted that the Sunday School movement, through a church where it is properly understood and strategically implemented, can remain an effective missionary force.” [slide 16]

3. Vibrant Leadership (15 min.)

- a) State that this brings us to the next of the three categories in the Transformational Loop: embrace proper values. Emphasize that a discerning missionary mentality must be built on proper values/mindset. Instruct groups to write a 30 second radio ad describing the proper values of a transformational Sunday School class (Group Assignment–Vibrant Leadership). Give groups five minutes to do their work and 30 seconds to read their radio ad. [slide 17]

- b) State that a transformational Sunday School class will embrace three values: vibrant leadership, relational intentionality, and prayerful dependence. Our discussion of those values will begin with vibrant leadership. [slides 18-19]
- c) Emphasize that vibrant leadership begins at the top. Pastors in transformational churches did not display autocratic leadership, but shared multiplying, empowering leadership.
- d) Direct participants to pages 16-19 in their book and ask them to identify *two key principles* of missional Sunday School classes. [slide 20]
- e) Ask them to find and call out characteristics of open groups. Write the characteristics on a tear sheet or marker board as they are named. Ask: *What is the difference between an open Sunday School group and a closed discipleship group?* Provide clarification as needed. [slides 22-23]
- f) State that if a Sunday School group is an open group, it will expect new people every week. That expectation will lead the class to: 1) set up with newcomers in mind, 2) wear nametags, and 3) make sure that every lesson is a complete and satisfying Bible study experience. [slides 24-25]
- g) Emphasize that one of the most important traits of open groups is that they practice open enrollment. Write three Bs on the marker board or tear sheet. State that these Bs represent the meaning of open enrollment. Ask the participants to go to page 19 and name what the Bs (belong before you believe). Ask participants to share what they see as the significance of that statement. Explain the implications of open enrollment and belonging before you believe. State that it requires vibrant leadership to emphasize the importance of open enrollment. [slide 26]
- h) State that there is one irreducible law of Sunday School growth: start new units. State that law will be explored in chapter 7. [slide 27]

4. Relational Intentionality (15 minutes)

- a) State that one of the most important values embraced by transformational churches and transformational classes is relational intentionality. [slide 28]
- b) Continue by stating that relational intentionality is demonstrated in transformational churches through groups. Quote from page 20: “In Transformational Churches, groups were ‘on purpose.’ And they were primarily focused on individual people.” [slide 29]
- c) State that in the intentional disciple-making process, there are typically five categories of groups in most churches. Call attention to the chart on page 21. Note the five different groups and the steps in the disciple-making process in 1920, 1980, and 2010. Note where Sunday School fell in those years. Ask participants to think about their church and answer the following two questions: *1) What groups do you have in your church? 2) How do the groups align in a discipleship process in your church?* (Handout 3: Relational Intentionality) Give participants three minutes to write down the types of groups they have and their alignment. Then ask volunteers to share their answers to the questions on the handout. Ask: *Does your church have an intentional discipleship process? Do you model relational intentionality?* [slides 30-35]

- d) State that research showed that in growing churches (churches that grew at least 5% for 3 consecutive years) ... Sunday School (or its equivalent) was “step-two” in 87.5%. [slide 36]
- e) Conclude the discussion of relational intentionality by stating that one of the best ways to model relational intentionality with adults is through Care Group Leaders. [slide 37] The role of care group leaders is to insure that *every member* is contacted *every week*. [slide 38]

5. Prayerful Dependence (15 minutes)

- a) State that this brings us to the third key value embraced by transformational churches and transformational classes: Prayerful Dependence. [slide 39].
- b) Hold up a clean, empty gas can. Ask: *What is the purpose of a gas can?* (to hold fuel or gas) *What is the purpose of gas?* (to provide power in order for something to run; to power something to accomplish its purpose) *What is the fuel that provides power, that drives, the transformational class?* After responses, show slide 40, quoting the opening sentence of this chapter: “Prayer is the fuel that drives the Transformational Churches.” [slide 40]
- c) Using Handout 4: Prayerful Dependence, divide the room into three sections. Instruct participants to form pairs with someone in their section and complete one element of the assignment (section 1: before class, section 2: during class, section 3: at the end of class). Ask volunteers to share. [slide 41]
- d) Direct pairs to page 27. Using the same divisions as before, assign pairs to identify examples of possible prayer requests if prayer is at the class level (section 1), the community level (section 2), or the commission level (section 3). [slide 42]
- e) Point out the three major categories the seven elements intersect: discern, embrace, and engage. We are now turning to the third category of engage. [slide 43]

6. Worship (15 minutes)

- a) State that one of the key elements in transformational churches and transformational classes is to engage people in worship. State that obviously corporate worship is a key ingredient in engaging people in worship. Ask the participants to name how a transformational Sunday School class can be a key ingredient in involving the people in personal or private worship. List responses on a tear sheet or marker board. [slide 44-45].
- b) State that there are two major assimilation problems: 1) People praying to receive Christ away from the church who never make it to church for baptism. 2) People who have attended or even joined the church but who have never progressed beyond worship service attendance in the disciple-making process. [slide 46]
- c) Divide participants into two or four groups; assign one of the following to the groups (Case Study: Worship):
 - 1) Your church had a wonderful Vacation Bible School this year. The teachers were well prepared. The children were enthusiastic about the week. Eighteen children made professions of faith during the week. Eleven of the children were from families that had no church affiliation. How might the Sunday School in your church be involved in following up on those decisions and reaching and involving those families?

- 2) There is a large difference between the attendance in your worship service and the attendance in your Sunday School. It seems that there are a large number of people that come only to worship service and have no other relationships within the church or ties to the church. How might your Sunday School be instrumental in developing relationships with those people and involving them further in the life of the church.
- d) Call for brief reports on these case studies.
 - e) Point out how Sunday School can be the solution to the assimilation problem. State that Sunday School demonstrates the 80/20 Principle. Ask the participants to read the last paragraph on page 30 and then ask for someone to name the 80/20 Principle. (Among those who *only attended worship*, fewer than 20% were still active after 5 years. Among those who *attended Sunday School*, over 80% were still active after 5 years.) [slide 47]
 - f) State that “obedience is worship.” It is the “so what?” of the lesson. Explain how the curriculum at LifeWay is designed to answer the “so what?” of each age group. That discipleship process that facilitates application is called LifeSpan. Explain the verbs used in each of the age segments of LifeSpan. [slides 48-50]
 - g) Ask: *What is the primary process through which we reach most people for Christ?* Explain the two processes: Conversation > Conversion > Community or Conversation > Community > Conversion. Discuss how most people are reached for Christ through the later of the two processes and how Sunday School is best designed to work that way. [slide 51]
 - h) Write BBB on the marker board or tear sheet. Beside the Bs write: *Belong Before you Believe*. The Sunday School is the best tool for accomplishing assimilation and a place where people can *belong before they believe*. [slides 52]

7. Community (15 minutes)

- a) State: *Transformational Churches (and classes) are intentional about engaging people through community*. [slide 53]
- b) State that the five elements of group life identified in transformational churches are: 1) Mission orientation, 2) Word-driven, 3) Multiplication mindset, 4) Stranger welcoming, and 5) Kingdom focused. Then ask: *What does that sound like?* (A great Sunday School class) [slide 54]
- c) Call for a volunteer to name the three Ss found on page 34 that are evident in places where people experience a sense of community (Scripture, Stories, Shepherding). Briefly relate how these three things can be experienced through a transformational Sunday School class. [slide 55]
- d) Call attention to the heading on page 35. State: *No one’s story is complete until it has intersected with God’s story, which happens best in community being enriched by the stories of others*. Ask someone to share with the group a specific instance where they have seen this come to life in a Sunday School class. [slide 56]
- e) Distribute Handout 5: Community. Ask each person to scan the community column on the chart, putting a plus (+) or minus (-) mark beside each word in the column indicating whether or not the

word is descriptive of their Sunday School class (or their Sunday School in general). Discuss what they found. [slide 57]

- f) State that a transformational class will have a multiplication mindset. David Francis identifies three expectations that will characterize that mindset: 1. Expect new people every week. 2. Expect people to say “yes.” 3. Expect to plant new classes. Those three expectations will lead to a culture and legacy of new classes by self-determining to multiply. [slide 58]

8. Mission (15 minutes)

- a) State that *mission* is an action word that describes a transformational class. A transformational class is on mission. [slide 59]
- b) State that three R-words describe the actions of a transformational class that is exhibiting mission: Release, Reproduce, and Reach. [slide 60]
- c) Divide participants into three groups. (If the attendance necessitates, divide into six groups). Refer to pages 38-40. Give each group one of the following assignments (Group Assignments: Mission):
 - 1) Release—What are ways an adult class can celebrate their members taking teaching or leadership roles in a class with kids or students?
 - 2) Reproduce—The primary indication that an adult class intends to reproduce itself is the enlistment of an Apprentice Teacher. Describe the traits of an apprentice teacher candidate.
 - 3) Reach—How would you describe “holy conversation?” [slides 61-63]

Call on the groups to report. Discuss and elaborate as needed and as time permits.

- d) Ask: *What is the difference between the missional outlook of a class between the following two questions: “What can we do to get more people to join our church or class?” and “What can our church or class do to make our community a better place to live?”* State that the later of the two questions reflects a transformational class with a focus on mission. [slide 64]
- e) State: *We have explored how seven elements of a Transformational Church are exhibited in a transformational class.* Then ask: *Where do you start?* State that the great characteristic of a transformational Sunday School class is convergence. It doesn’t really matter where you start. You can start with any of the elements. The elements will all relate to one another and strengthen one another. Just start. [slide 65]
- f) Close by asking: *What is your story?* Refer to “Sandy’s Story” on page 43-44. State that every Sunday School class has a story. The exciting next chapter for their class or their Sunday School is yet to be written. It’s their choice to write that next chapter. [slides 66-67]
- g) Close the training session in prayer.