

“Fundamentals of Soul-Saving Sabbath Schools”



Presented By

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Seminar Objectives

- Explore the history of Sabbath School
- Understand the true mission of Sabbath School
- Recognize the value of Sabbath School as a Key evangelism tool
- Explore a systematic approach to increasing Sabbath School attendance
- Discover effective ways to bring life to Sabbath School Programs

Know the History of Sabbath School

- 1852 – James White wrote the first Sabbath School lessons: “The Youth Instructor”
- 1853 – First Sabbath Schools conducted – Rochester and Bucks Bridge, New York
- 1863 – SDA Church organized; First children’s Sabbath School lessons written by Adela Patten; Uriah Smith wrote adult Sabbath School lessons
- 1869 – Dr. G. H. Bell proposed a Sabbath School format:
 - ☐ Song Service
 - ☐ Welcome
 - ☐ Opening Prayer
 - ☐ Scripture Reading
 - ☐ Secretary’s Report
 - ☐ Superintendent's Remarks
 - ☐ Special Music or Mission Report
- 1878 – General Conference Sabbath School Association formed; Sabbath School reporting system devised
- 1880s – First Sabbath School mission and expense offerings collected
- 1901 – Development of Sabbath School basically finalized
- 1990s – “Sabbath School Revitalized” published by the General Conference, proposing that Sabbath School be organized around: BIBLE STUDY, FELLOWSHIP, COMMUNITY OUTREACH, WORLD MISSION EMPHASIS.

Incorporate the Components (Bible Study)



II Timothy 2:15 – Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Ephesians 1:17-19– That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: (18) The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, (19) And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power...

- The Sabbath School class provides one of the most effective ways to increase people's understanding of scripture.
- Sabbath School allows for a sharing of knowledge and understanding that isn't possible in a lecture method. It is in this setting that biblical principles are really tested and applied.
- Sabbath School students should learn something new from the Bible every week.
- Gospel themes should be replicated to deepen learning.
- Every member of the local church should be engaged in Sabbath School Classes.
- Teacher selections must be guided by the Holy Spirit; teachers must be baptized in the Holy Spirit.

Incorporate the Components

(Bible Study Application: Practicing the Truth)



James 4:17 – Therefore to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

- Sabbath School lessons are designed to help participants make positive life changes.
- Teaching a lesson without applying its principles is a waste of time.
- Sabbath School should foster commitment and servanthood.
- An invitation to draw closer to Christ should be made at the end of every Sabbath School class.

Incorporate the Components (Fellowship)

Acts 2:42 – And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.



- Fellowship - an integral part of the early church
- Interest in human needs expressed in fellowship
- Prayer needs addressed in fellowship
- Relationships are developed in fellowship

Incorporate the Components (Community Outreach)

Isaiah 61:1-2 – THE SPIRIT of the LORD GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good things unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. (2) To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.

- Communities around the world are filled with brokenhearted people whose primary cure is the gospel
- Sabbath School outreach is capable of addressing most human needs
- The Sabbath School should promote the vision of the Church in the community
- Membership growth is evidence of effective community outreach programs

Incorporate the Components (Missions)

- *Matthew 24:14 - And **this gospel** of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.*
- A clear vision of the Church's global mission should be apparent in Sabbath School.
- Outreach (local and world missions) should be a priority for every Sabbath School class and church congregation.
- Personal, systematic, and self-denying financial contributions should be solicited weekly, along with fervent prayers within the Sabbath School.

Spirit of Prophecy

Sabbath School: A Marvelous Power for Good

Our Sabbath schools are nothing less than Bible societies, and in the sacred work of teaching the truths of God's word, they can accomplish far more than they have hitherto accomplished. The Sabbath school, when rightly managed, possesses marvelous power, and is adapted to doing a great work, but it is not now [WRITTEN IN 1889] what it may and should be. The influence growing out of Sabbath school work should improve and enlarge the church; but in no case should it ever be allowed to divert from the interests of the church. There is a most precious missionary field in the Sabbath school, and if there are now omens of good, they are only indications and beginnings of what may be done.—

Counsels on Sabbath School Work (1938), page 9, paragraph 2

Spirit of Prophecy

Sabbath School: Effectual Soul-winning Agency

The Sabbath school should be one of the greatest instrumentalities, and the most effectual, in bringing souls to Christ.—

Counsels on Sabbath School Work (1938), page 10, paragraph 2

Spirit of Prophecy

Sabbath School: A Converting Power

The Sabbath school is an important branch of the missionary work, not only because it gives to young and old a knowledge of God's word, but because it awakens in them a love for its sacred truths, and a desire to study them for themselves; above all, it teaches them to regulate their lives by its holy teachings.—

Counsels on Sabbath School Work (1938), page 10, paragraph 4

Sabbath School Attendance Shortfalls Not to be Overlooked



- Worldwide, Sabbath School attendance is higher than church attendance.
- In most **North American Division SDA churches**, less than 50% of the members attend Sabbath School.
- More than half of the NAD Sabbath School Attendees are women (62% of NAD membership represented by women - 2007).
- The majority of NAD attendees do not arrive to Sabbath School on time.

Possible Reasons for Low Sabbath School Attendance

1. Lack of spiritual commitment
2. Apathetic church response
3. Participants anticipate hearing two sermons
(Sermon/lecture from SS teacher; sermon from pastor)
4. Undeveloped relationships among members
5. Routine and boring Sabbath School Programs
6. Limited attendee participation

Suggested Ways to Increase Sabbath School Attendance

1. Pray earnestly for increased Sabbath School Attendance.
2. Center Sabbath School programs around the elements of **Bible Study, Fellowship, Community Outreach and Missions.**
2. Proactively plan Sabbath School Programs, ensuring organization that meets heaven's approval.
3. Call missing and regularly attending members.
4. Arrive early as an example to others.
6. Invite select members to present special programs, i.e., seniors, youth, or children.
7. Plan and promote special music well in advance.
8. Regularly show appreciation for early arrivers and other SS participants.
9. Heavily involve parents in children's divisions.
10. Engage the Pastor and Church leaders in a Sabbath School revival campaign.

Make Sabbath School Interesting

Bring Life to Sabbath School Programs

- Know your Sabbath School base
“You can’t manage what you don’t measure.”
- Eliminate the Routine
- Employ continuous training and development for Sabbath School teachers and leaders.

Know Your Sabbath School Base



- Sabbath School Attendance
 - How many people attended regularly last year? Last month?
 - What are the attendance goals for this year? How will attendance goals be advertised?
- Visitors by name
 - How many visitors are attending? What visitation patterns require follow-up?
- Sabbath School Participation log
 - Who's participating on the Sabbath School program? Should there be increased variation among participants? How are participants advertised?
- Daily lesson study
 - How effective is the "Bible Study" element of Sabbath School? What incentives are given to persons with consistent daily lesson study?
- Offering
 - Do Sabbath School offering contributions correspond with stewardship goals?
- Sabbath School Program Evaluation
 - Does the Sabbath School meet the needs of the SS members? Does it meet the objectives defined by the Seventh-day Adventist Church:, **Bible Study, Fellowship, Community Outreach and Missions?**

Eliminate the Routine

- Change the seating arrangement of SS classes where possible, i.e., roundtables, panels.
- Break routine and traditional programs with creative interactive activities, i.e., concerts, dramas, real-life mission stories, etc...
- Implement a variety of SS classes.

Ongoing Training and Development

- Engage Sabbath School teachers and leaders in earnest prayer sessions.
- Help Sabbath School teachers to become facilitators, moving away from the lecturing mode.
- Increase focus on “affective learning” – that facilitates responses to the “So What?” question and helps participants make life applications that lead to positive life changes.

Spirit of Prophecy

Sabbath School: Worth Our Best Efforts

The Sabbath school should be a place where the jewels of truth are searched for and rescued from their environment of error, and placed in their true setting in the framework of the gospel. Precious gems of truth, long lost sight of, are now to be restored to the children of God. The themes of justification by faith, the righteousness of Christ, should be presented in our schools, that the youth and children may understand these important subjects, and teachers and scholars may know the way of salvation. Sacred and eternal principles connected with the plan of salvation have long been lost from sight, but they must be restored to their proper place in the plan of salvation, and made to appear in their heavenly light, and penetrate the moral darkness in which the world is enshrouded.

Counsels on Sabbath School Work (1938), page 12, paragraph 2

Trust God for Sabbath School Success!

Give your best to God and He promises to give His best to you!

Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. ([Psalm 37:5](#))

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord, and depart from evil. ([Proverbs 3:5-10](#))

And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labour, it is the gift of God. ([Ecclesiastes 3:13](#))

They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them. ([Isaiah 65:23](#))

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. ([Matthew 6:33](#))

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? ([Romans 8:32](#))

The End