

# **TRAINING WORKERS FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL**

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**Pastor Edward Watke, Jr.**

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## THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING

Training may well be the single most important ingredient in building a solid, evangelistic, growing Sunday School (or Bible study hour). Surveys prove that churches that put a premium on training their workers experience much greater permanent growth than those that neglect this emphasis. In some large, growing, dynamic churches, a great deal of time and money is put into training their workers in the Sunday School.

**All of us do no better than we know how to do.** Sunday School officers, workers, and teachers do no better than they know how to do. Those who are trained and committed know where their Sunday School is going and how it is going to get there. They are committed to improving their teaching, outreach, and overall influence in the ministry to which God has called them.

**1. Training is required of all players.** Most ball players spend years in learning and practicing the fundamentals of their game. Spring training is an annual event that resharpens the players' "tools of the trade." Even the veteran is not exempt from preparation for a new season. Veterans can teach the younger players from experience and by example. Length of service alone does not insure a consistently high level of performance. Whatever the level of difficulty of the labor, consistent practice is necessary to achieve success.

Should it be any different for God's people? Good workers will see the need of spending time in training. They see the need of the weekly staff meeting and the special training sessions what are offered by a growing, dynamic church. A dedicated worker will desire to impact the lives of the younger, newly-enlisted workers. Room for improvement is there for all of us!

**2. Training helps forge individuals into a team.** Championships won by ball teams usually take place because of a strong team spirit. Each player is a skilled professional who is not a loner, but a team player. Talent does not mean much if a cooperative team spirit is lacking.

Sunday School workers have a God-given task of reaching people for Bible Study. Their goal is to mold lives and to meet needs in a loving, caring way. Training helps workers become competent in their specific part of the total task of the Sunday School.

## CHRIST'S EXAMPLE IN TRAINING OTHERS

Christ did not send forth untrained or unskilled followers. He trained them by example, by guidance, and by personal instruction. In Matthew 9 and 10, for example, we see Christ giving detailed instructions prior to sending out the twelve on their mission.

**1. Training means helping workers see the needs and how to meet them. (See Matthew 9:35--10:1.)** Christ's ministry had draw the crowds. Now He wanted the disciples to understand the need of the people. Jesus told His followers they must recognize that the harvest fields are white unto harvest, and pray for laborers. He also trained them to go into the harvest field.

**2. Training means enabling workers to understand the entire task. (See Matthew 10:5-15.)** Jesus presented a comprehensive view of what the disciples were to do as they sought to minister to the Jews at that time. They were to know

their audience (Note 10:5, 6) and the kind of ministry needed (See 10:7, 8.). He gave them a message to proclaim and a ministry to fulfill. Their primary focus was to be upon the needs of the people rather than on their own concerns and interests. Workers ought to have a clear understanding of the time, energy, and commitment needed for such important matters as lesson preparation, visiting members and prospects, maintaining proper records --and should adjust their priorities to accomplish their ministry.

Christ had given His followers an awesome task. As recipients of ministry they also had great responsibility (See 10:11-15.). The teaching-learning process was a joint venture with their Master. The same is true for us today. The ministry also brings great joys and spiritual pleasures.

**3. Training means preparing workers to face the realities of their task. (See Matthew 10:16-23.)** Christ's followers lived with the hostility and persecution that Christ himself encountered. They needed to have a realistic view of the context learn how to deal with the obstacles they would meet. This is also true for us today. While we may not encounter the same kind of opposition, we need training so we will be prepared for resistance and difficulties in reaching people.

**4. Training means encouraging workers as they minister through the Sunday School. (See Matt 10:24-33.)** Christ encouraged the disciples about some of the trials they would face. He reminded them that although at times they might feel all alone, He was with them. Although they might be rejected, their efforts would not go unnoticed by the Father. They would be rewarded for their labors.

All Sunday School workers ought to be encouraged by their relationship to Christ, by the Father's constant knowledge of His children, and by the fact of eternal results from winning and ministering to others.

**5. Training means presenting accurately the commitment we must give in order to be effective workers. (See Matthew 10:34-39.)** Commitment to Christ could -- and, no doubt, did -- create divisions in families in Christ's day. He recognized that loyalty to Him could bring strife within a family.

Our dedication must be wholehearted; we must be willing to pay the price of service. As workers we must come to terms with the kind of allegiance required to become effective servants for the Savior. Training to serve Him may cost us something, and that is good. We may need to adjust priorities and yield our all to Him. If we do not feel that is necessary, how will we impact the lost or the newly-saved?

**6. Training means sharing with workers in the present and eternal rewards of serving Christ. (See Matthew 10:40-42.)** To see people mature in Christ, and to see our witness result in someone coming to Him as Savior and Lord brings tremendous excitement to the Sunday School worker. To become a sharp tool for Christ through training in every way possible is well worth it all.

*Training workers is biblical. It is reinforced by the fact that Christ trained His apostles for three years. Surely some training is needed by all of us.*

## THE NECESSITY FOR TRAINING

If we all agree that reaching more people for Christ is important; if teaching the Bible for all ages on their own level is significant; if growing a church through a growing Sunday School is realistic; then training workers is *imperative*.

**1. Training is essential if we are to meet the organizational growth needs.** Enlarging the organization of the Bible Study hour is essential if there is going to be growth overall. As the Sunday School organization is expanded to provide for growth, qualified workers must be available to staff those departments. Many churches, large and small, have proven the fact that numerous workers in many smaller adult classes will bring greater growth. There must be trained workers for the growth goals. Workers must be trained prior to the need.

**2. Training is essential because training makes a difference in outreach and evangelism.** The lack of trained workers in today's churches probably will cause many skilled and highly-educated unsaved visitors to look elsewhere. There will be stability and growth gained from workers who know what they are doing and why. They will exude confidence that class members will sense. When teachers are trained in presenting God's Word in an interesting, challenging, and life-centered way, and do so in the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit, lives are changed -- the lost are saved and Christians are strengthened.

**3. Training is essential for the sake of the workers themselves.** Many workers are relatively new in the Lord. Certainly they need basic training in understanding the Bible, in teaching doctrine, and in working with the age group to whom they are ministering. Some have never taught before or served as a worker in the Sunday School organization. For some it becomes a new experience, with new relationships, new responsibilities, and new challenges. All workers need to sharpen their skills and strive constantly to improve in their tasks.

**4. Training is essential because of the nature and needs of the Sunday School or Bible study hour.** Knowing how to teach, to organize, to witness, to inspire others, to lead, is not something we inherit or have innate ability to do. Most of the enthusiasm, confidence, and competence shown by some workers has been a result of training. Training helped to produce these qualities.

In a research within Southern Baptist Sunday Schools of less than 150 in attendance, *better trained workers was identified as the third most prominent need.* The other two needs were a more systematic, effective visitation program for enlisting prospects and better planning in the total Sunday School ministry.

If we are to recognize and utilize the spiritual gifts God has given to His people, it will demand that training is also supplied for their benefit. *The better workers are equipped, the better a Sunday School will become.*

## THE VALUE OF TRAINING

The values which flow out of training a group of workers are many and varied. Training the workers produces many positive results for both the workers and the churches. We will list a few:

**1. Workers no longer have any doubts as to what their role is in the life of the church.**

**2. They know what God expects of them as they serve in many varied capacities.**

**3. They know what the church expects of them and how to fulfill those expectations.**

**4. Workers become more concerned about knowing their pupils and meeting their needs.**

**5. There is a new vitality and thrill in serving the Lord. Many become excited about the Bible study hour.**

**6. Because of the enthusiasm of the trained workers, new workers come forward to serve.**

**7. There is a new concept of what it means to be a God-called, well-trained, and competent worker.**

**8. Serving the Lord takes on new meaning as people accept the need of training. Fulfilling the task of service becomes a rich blessing.**