

Teacher Training Workshop Lesson Plan

Topic: Sunday School Teacher Evaluation

As you endeavor to plan your new year of Christian education ministry in your local church, consider using the evaluation workshop to open dialogue about changes needed. It is always vital that we look at the past and present, as we prepare for the future. This process of evaluation will enhance our ministry, if done in a positive and non-threatening manner.

LOOKING BACK—LOOKING AHEAD

OBJECTIVES:

1. The teachers will evaluate themselves.
2. The teachers will share areas of strength and areas of weakness.
3. Individually and collectively, the teachers will strive for improvement in their dedication to their high calling.

OPENING:

Read or tell in your own words the following illustration from Chuck Swindoll's book, *Rise and Shine*.

When the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations was opened by Queen Victoria in 1851, people flocked to Hyde Park to behold what they called the 'marvels.' The magic power back then was steam . . . steam plows, steam organ, even a steam cannon.

Do you know what won the prize? It was a steam-driven invention that had seven thousand parts—all kinds of pulleys and bells and whistles and gears . . . gears that meshed with other gears that hummed in harmony and whirled in perfect synchronization. It was a sight to behold. Interestingly, it accomplished nothing (page 50).

LESSON:

Often, we become like that prize-winning machine. Our classes are all covered . . . The system is all clear . . . All is going well. It is not enough to have a Sunday school program reflecting all kinds of activity. We are deceiving ourselves. We must ask ourselves, what are we accomplishing? Our goal is not merely to have a Sunday school program. We are a vital part of this church whose overall goal is to glorify God.

(Hand out the Self-Evaluation sheets.) Teachers hold one of the highest callings in the Body of Christ. (Read together, you read, or have someone else read the opening quotation at the top of the page. Pause, allowing the fullness of the paragraph to sink in. You may ask them to verbalize their feelings about it. Have them share how this truth applies to the particular age group they are teaching.)

To be an effective teacher is not all based on how well you know the subject you are teaching. When it comes to teaching God's people (children), much of our effectiveness is based on our relationship to God, our attitude toward our responsibilities as teachers, and our love for our students. (As you read each sentence aloud under the section: "During this past year," have them personally rate themselves on the scale of one to five. Then do the same for the last three statements under "Today.")

(Be sure you have taken this inventory yourself in your relationship to your teachers and staff. They are your students!)

(As time permits, allow for them to share areas of strength and weakness. It is wise for you to be transparent with them and share your own. Verbalize areas you hope to improve as you begin this new year.)

(Give each teacher a legal-size envelope. Ask them to put their evaluations inside the envelope and seal it. File them in a safe place. Give them back to them in six months at a meeting so that they can evaluate how they are doing.)

CLOSING:

(Form a prayer circle, include all teachers, workers and yourself.)

Suggestions:

1. Tell them how much you appreciate them.
2. Share your renewed commitment to them: to pray for them, to encourage them, to help them in any way they can. But then tell them that in order for you to give yourself to them as God would have you to do, you realize you must give yourself anew to the Lord through your prayer life, study of His Word. (This is the key for their growth, too.)

3. Have one of them pray a prayer of rededication or, if you choose to do it, pray identifying with them in your needs.

OBSERVATIONS:

1. The atmosphere was quite somber except for the illustration in the beginning. At first, I thought they felt I was being hard on them. (Like I was picking on them!) They became much more receptive of the activity when I identified with them.
2. This exercise ironically can become like that machine in the opening illustration unless you purposefully put it to good use. First of all, take your evaluation and commitment to change seriously. (If your time priorities don't permit you to do so, maybe you need to reconsider your use of time.) Mention these areas throughout the year; reuse this same evaluation in six months to see how you all are doing.
3. The three points under "Today" are a good barometer of their sense of commitment to their role in the Sunday school program. Tell them that if their gut-level response to these three questions was not on the strong end of the scale, then they might consider taking a sabbatical from their Sunday school position. (As leaders we hold our breath at such a statement because we "need their bodies." Remember, this is God's program. He wants the best.)