

CREATIVE WAYS TO TRAIN SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS



At a recent conference entitled *Creative Ways to Train Your Teachers*, we began by listing Sunday School workers who need training. The group identified teachers; substitute teachers; potential teachers; class leaders like secretary, outreach leader, fellowship leader, and others; Sunday School directors, pastors, and others.

Then we formed three groups to identify reasons why training is important and creative ways to provide training. The groups had great responses to both questions. At that point, I shared a wide variety of training ideas, some the class had never considered and some they had not thought about in years. Here are many that I shared:

1. provide a book or article; ask them to read and complete questions you provide
2. provide a book or article; get together to discuss one or more chapter each month (or week)
3. provide a book or article; get together at a retreat to discuss it
4. take leaders to a training event sponsored by associational, state, or national leadership; travel together; debrief while traveling and/or at a scheduled time after the event and/or in age groups
5. take leaders to a training event; attend different conferences; set up a time to share the training everyone got upon return
6. request a general, all ages, Sunday School training event at your church from associational or state leadership (www.texasbaptists.org/biblestudy)
7. request specific age group training from associational or state leadership
8. request topical training (*like outreach, or teaching methods, etc.*) from associational or state leadership
9. request training from associational or state leadership for your church and another church, for area churches, or for your association
10. set up your **own** fun training events:
 - assign a topic to different teachers and ask them to prepare a short presentation for the other teachers in their age group
 - contact a neighboring church and plan two training events with one church hosting while the other provides training leadership; then switch
 - offer small segments of training during every worker meeting, whether monthly or weekly or quarterly

- plan an annual overnight leadership retreat which includes training
- plan a Sunday School launch (promotion) week which includes cleaning/setting up classrooms and training the week before the new year begins
- provide substitutes and training for a small group of your teachers for a month during Sunday School; rotate the group
- invite the pastor to share his vision for the Sunday School this year
- gather teachers to develop an agreed upon teacher covenant (reinforces good work and is opportunity for small doses of training)
- gather teachers to evaluate Sunday School progress and set goals for the coming year (same as above)
- provide potential teacher training at least once every year
- provide a coach for every 3-5 teachers for regular training, encouragement, mentoring, and accountability
- walk through classroom space with teachers and talk about good space use
- invite a speaker for morning worship to preach on elements of effective Sunday School work; follow the service with a meal and a brief time of training
- set up a worker appreciation banquet combined with a training event and/or Sunday School speaker
- conduct a training library or space scavenger hunt with clues leading to topics or age group training facts for discussion
- develop your training around a fun theme; decorate, promote, and have fun training around the theme
- take workers on a field trip to another church or a business and debrief the experience
- watch a training event; provide popcorn and a listening guide; debrief
- watch a sports event together; have them look for examples of teamwork; debrief; apply lessons to Sunday School
- have a progressive dinner training event, going from house to house for appetizer and training, main course and training, and dessert and training
- since 60% of people today are visual learners, put up lots of pictures and training facts in the training area
- present an object lesson for Sunday School training
- since they will remember 90% of what they say and do, don't just tell them how to do something; lead them to say and do it

I closed with some suggestions for increasing participation in training events:

1. include training as a part of high expectations at the time the worker is enlisted
2. let them know training is expected and then follow up with those who miss
3. require training (for example 3 out of 4 training events/methods)
4. make it quality and fun
5. make it convenient
6. start on time; end on time
7. provide food
8. provide childcare
9. make it special
10. enlist everyone to help in some specific way with the event

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