

PK's Perspectives... Sunday School

Leading a Sunday school to be healthy and growing is hard work. It is a high-maintenance strategy involving a large number of the congregation. The results can also have a high return. Sunday school is a tool that can involve every generation in the church in evangelism, Bible study, fellowship, ministry, and assimilation of new members. Do you have a saw in your garage? Go out to your garage and watch it work. It will not work if it is not in someone's hand. It is only a tool. Take the saw and hold it. It still does not work, does it? You have to know what to do with it. You have to keep the blade sharp and use it in the way that it was designed. Sunday school is a tool. You cannot sit back and watch it work. You have to sharpen it and apply it in the way that it is intended. The problem is not that Sunday school will not work. The problem is that we have goodhearted teachers and leaders who have not been taught how to use the tool. How can you know if Sunday school is working correctly? You will see at least three results.

The lost will be reached. The word *lost* is not a contemporary term but a biblical term often used to describe the state of a person who does not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. A class or a church can express the purpose of the Sunday school in many ways. Ultimately, I believe the purpose is to enable the church to strategically embrace and engage the Great Commission as stated by Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20. A Sunday school that works is one that equips and challenges the classes or small groups to move beyond the church walls and into the community, working together to share the gospel and bring people to Christ. Sadly, many classes meet for Bible study and give no consideration, time, or effort to this end.

Lives will be changed. God's Word is powerful, and people are transformed as they are exposed to it. Many Sunday school teachers and class members have concluded that the purpose of Sunday school is to study the Bible, and that is what they are doing. Therefore, they see themselves as successful. James 1:22 says, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." A Bible study in a Sunday school class or a small group of any kind is not intended to be an academic exercise. It is intended to be an encounter with God that affects the participants' lives day in and day out. An encounter with God's Word should lead to personal spiritual growth that in turn leads to life change. The teacher of the class bears the responsibility of confronting the class members with the truth of God's Word with the aim of personal application and the spiritual growth of all members.

Leaders will be sent. Rick Warren rightly states that the measure of a healthy church is not its seating capacity but its sending capacity. The same is true of a Sunday school class. A consistent encounter with God through the study of his Word will lead many participants out of the class into ministry. Many children and students who grow up in a healthy Sunday school will heed God's call to missions and ministry. All members will feel compelled to find their place of service within the existing class or externally as God sends them. Each class will have members who do not attend regularly as well as those who attend and choose to do nothing but sit and listen. The teacher of a healthy class will be frustrated by that fact but will understand that moving one, two, or three class members into leadership each year can make a huge impact in the life of the church.

Good stuff from Steve Parr's book [Sunday School That Really Works](#)
Cya Sunday morning @ FBC & Sunday evening @ the Prayer Walk, PK