

Sunday School Enrollment

By Daniel Edmonds

I had the opportunity to train a pastor and his church on how to properly enroll people in Sunday School. A few months later, the pastor and I attended a conference together on Sunday School health. The conference leader was sharing different ways to discover prospects. The pastor raised his hand and said, *"We never have prospects!"* The leader asked him if he had tried a variety of the techniques. The pastor replied, *"We have tried them all, but as soon as we discover a prospect we ask them to enroll and they always agree; therefore, they are no longer prospects."* I am certain that I do not get a "yes" every time, but I do expect it.

Why do I expect people to agree to enrollment? Because I do not ask them to commit to the group, but I ask them if they are willing to have a group commit to serve *them*. Several years ago, I came to the realization that enrollment does not represent an individual's commitment to the class, but the commitment of the class to the individual. Enrollment is not about a person attending the class, but it is about the class attending to the needs of the individual. Enrollment becomes the way a class extends its' ministry and mission field by identifying people to whom it can demonstrate the love of Christ.

In general, when I meet someone I ask them if they have a group of people to pray for and support them. I tell them that I have a group that consistently will do that for me and that it brings me joy and comfort in my daily life. I ask them for the privilege of providing them with a group of people who will pray for them, share with them, and care for them if they have a need. I assure them that they have no obligation to the group, but that the group will be obligated to them. Then I ask, *"Would you like to have a group of people praying for you, sharing with you, and caring for you and your family if you have a need?"* I am not surprised when they say "yes!"

Sunday School has a mission of sharing the love of Christ with everyone. We express a willingness to be on mission when we offer people an opportunity to be enrolled. When they say, "yes," provide the ministry that has been promised and you will discover that when we live as Christ, He draws people to Himself. Expect people to say, "Yes!" to enrollment, and then complete the mission.



Increase Sunday School Attendance by Increasing Enrollment – Ken Braddy

Posted by sundayschoolguy on December 10, 2010

If you want to see your overall Sunday School attendance increase, consider the relationship between it and enrollment. In almost any church, Sunday School attendance is approximately 50% of enrollment. The same principle works for Sunday School classes. A class that has 24 people enrolled will almost surely have 10-14 people in attendance on any given Sunday. If you want to increase weekly attendance, increase enrollment.

If my Sunday School was averaging 200 people per week, and I wanted to set a goal of averaging 240 people in one year, I'd need to enroll at least 80 new people. 80 new enrollees would give the Sunday School an increase of about 40 people. On a class level, if a class was averaging 10 people and wanted to have an average attendance of 15 in one year, the class members should enroll 10 new people to have an increase of 5.

Now, back to the 80 person example. Those 80 people will come from all age groups, right? So how many preschoolers, children, students, and adults should you enroll to achieve your 80 person goal? The answer lies in your current attendance patterns.

Every church has a pattern of attendance in their Sunday School. Gather your Sunday School attendance records for several years, and select about 24 random dates. Determine your average attendance, and then determine your average attendance in your preschool, children, student, and adult classes. Now divide the average attendance in each age group by your total average attendance, and you'll get each age division's percent of total attendance.

Let's say that you do all the above and determine that on a typical Sunday, your preschool attendance is 15% of your total attendance, children are 20% of your total attendance, students are 10% of your total attendance, and adults are 55% of your total attendance. These figures won't change much over time unless something very dramatic happens in your church.

Now, let's go back to the 80 new enrollees you need to increase attendance by 40. 15% of those new enrollees should be preschoolers (12), 20% should be children (16), 8 will be students (10%), and 44 will be adults (55%). Now you can set enrollment goals for each age division and follow up each month to see how you're doing on meeting your enrollment goals.

One final word of encouragement: in the example above, you'd only have to enroll 1 new preschooler each month in order to achieve your enrollment goal for that area of ministry. You'd have to enroll 1.3 children each month, .67 students per month, and 3.67 adults per month!

When you break enrollment goals down, you'll discover how manageable enrollment goals actually are! 80 new enrollees may seem daunting, but remember the saying, "It's a sinch by the inch, it's hard by the yard."

Don't think that the secret to Sunday School growth lies in a numbers game. There is a God factor that is bigger than all that. Pray for God's blessing and be wise in the way you lead your Sunday School or your Sunday School class. But don't feel bad about setting enrollment goals...after all, numbers represent people. And remember, one way to increase your average attendance is to increase your total enrollment. Simply enrolling someone won't necessarily increase your attendance, though! Once a person is enrolled in your Sunday School or a Sunday School class, they become the object of ministry. Love them, support them, encourage them, contact them, and get them involved. Do those things, and you'll see attendance rise and you become responsible for those whom God sends to your church.