

Adventist Heritage

Flora Plummer and Her Times



160
YEARS of
SABBATH SCHOOL

Program Help Outline

Song Service
Theme Song
Worship in Prayer
Welcome
Mission Emphasis
Personal Growth Time
Class Time

Call to Commitment:

The superintendent may invite attendees to review the four goals of Sabbath School orally. The teacher may invite class members to apply the topic of the lesson study to their lives, and invite guests to study for baptism. Ask your pastor for guidance.

Playtime for Adults:

“From an accounting viewpoint we often cannot justify play. We must spend our time wisely and that means getting through the agenda. . . . Once we understand that the investment in play is an investment in the more obvious parts of our agenda, we are freed to play with abandon. . . . Often the playtime is the very door through which fresh insight comes. Despise not the lighthearted times!” (Richard Allen Farmer, *It Won't Fly If You Don't Try*, p. 43).

Lesson Focus:

Not by Sight helps remind our members of how little we can trust the senses. Use the podium or another hard surface in the illustration. Have participants prepared to read the texts in the program. Get a flipchart and markers.

Song Service

SDA Hymnal: “O God of Light”; “Blest Be the Tie That Binds”

Church Hymnal: “Lead On, O King Eternal”; “The Church Has One Foundation”

He Is Our Song: “The Law of the Lord”; “Wonderful Lord”

Theme Song: “Bring Me Back, Lord”

Scripture

Revelation 2:9; Psalm 119:103-105

Welcome

Lesson Focus: You've probably heard someone say in exasperation, "Your eyes are deceiving you!" or "You're hearing things!" Or perhaps you've been puzzled by one of those games in which you connect the dots, with the seemingly impossible directions "Don't cross any lines." Today we're going to talk about how much to trust our senses.

"Flora Plummer and Her Times": Our series on Adventist Heritage is giving out a lot of information that is new to some of us. Today we will meet Flora Plummer, a pioneer in Adventist history who lived in a world much like ours.

Lesson Focus: Not by Sight

There is a discipline in philosophy and in art that deals only with aesthetics, the "science" of the beautiful. Sight, hearing, taste, touch, and smell have their roles in helping us understand the world around us. What kind of enjoyment do you get from the senses? **(Accept responses.)** In what ways do they help protect you from potential dangers? **(Accept responses.)** There's no question that we do all use, enjoy, and need our senses. They are an inseparable part of who we are. And yet we must be aware of the limitations of our senses. Sometimes they don't give us an accurate picture of what's really out there. How many of you have ever seen a mirage, a reflection in the desert that makes a person think they see a pool of water? What other examples can you share about how our senses deceive us? ***(Within your time frame, accept responses and illustrations that people want to make on the flipchart.)***

A fascinating example of sensory deception deals with the nature of matter itself. ***(Smack the podium or other hard surface.)*** Our sight and touch tell us that this item is hard, solid, and dense, right? That's how it appears to our senses) but it is not solid. It is composed of atoms that are composed of tiny particles that are proportionally very wide apart. When these particles are placed together, they are still far apart—no matter how close, solid, or dense they look to us. People who believe in the soon coming of Christ should remember this fact.

(Have volunteers read aloud the following verses: Revelation 12:9; 13:14; 18:23; 19:20; 20:3; 20:8; 20:10. After each reading, ask: "What is the text warning us about?")

In the last day there is going to be a great deal of deception. The texts just read indicate that many people, the nations, will be deceived by Satan. Listen to this quote from Ellen G. White, a Christian author: "Only those who have been diligent students of the Scriptures and who have received the love of the truth will be shielded from the powerful delusion that takes the world captive. By the Bible testimony these will detect the deceiver in his disguise. To all the testing time will come. By the sifting of temptation the genuine Christian will be revealed. Are the people of God now so firmly established upon His Word that they would not yield to the evidence of their senses? Would they, in such a crisis, cling to the Bible and the Bible only?" (*The Great Controversy*, p. 625).

So let's continue to enjoy our senses and to use them as God has planned. Let's remember, however, not to rely on them instead of or in opposition to the Word. For God's faithful remnant the question will be, as it always has been, what does God's Word say?

Flora Plummer and Her Times

Interviewer: Today, as part of our Adventist Heritage series, we have a very special

guest with us—Mrs. Flora Plummer, the only woman to have directed the General Conference Sabbath School Department. Mrs. Plummer, welcome to our Sabbath School. Were you in the GC Sabbath School Department from its start?

Plummer: When the first Sabbath School Department of the General Conference was organized in 1901, I became its corresponding secretary. Then in 1913 I was elected departmental director and continued until my retirement in 1936.

Interviewer: In that span of 23 years what kind of world was the church living in?

Plummer: (Adapt responses to reflect your area of the world.) Times were just as exciting then as they are now.

In 1901, the year the General Conference organized its Sabbath School Department, William McKinley, president of the United States, was assassinated. It happened on September 7, in Buffalo, New York, just after a 4:00 p.m. organ recital that McKinley was attending in the Temple of Music.

We had only newspaper accounts to inform us of the details. **(She draws from her purse a yellowed, wrinkled newspaper article.)** This one says that after the sound of gunfire was heard, and when the president's garments were "hastily loosened, and when a trickling stream of crimson was seen to wind its way down his breast, spreading its telltale stain over the white surface of the linen, [the people's] worst fears were confirmed."

On December 17, 1903, the Wright brothers made the first successful airplane flight at Kitty Hawk.

On April 18, 1906, San Francisco was rocked by an earthquake that killed at least 200 people and cost in excess of \$100,000,000. You can read Ellen White's firsthand account of this event in a book you now have called *Testimonies for the Church*, volume 9, pages 92-96.

In 1913, the year I became director of the General Conference Sabbath School Department, Henry Ford incorporated into his plant the first moving assembly line!

In 1914, the next year, World War I began.

In 1917, the United States entered that war.

Interviewer: When you first came to the General Conference Sabbath School Department as corresponding secretary, mission offerings per year were about \$22,000. When you retired as departmental director in 1936, they were about \$2,000,000 per year.

What other visions did you have for Sabbath Schools around the world?

Plummer: I felt there were some very important tasks to be accomplished:

- I strongly believed in the Sabbath School as a soul-winning agency to which people could come to study the Bible and reach out to others.
- I promoted the training of Sabbath School leaders and teachers in the use of sound educational theory and practice. In my book, *The Soul-Winning Teacher*, I wrote that "more skill, better judgment, riper knowledge, a deeper personal experience in the things taught, are required to teach the Holy Scriptures well, than to teach anything else" and that "one should be able to teach sacred truth as carefully and as accurately as he would teach mathematics" (p. 47).

Interviewer: Mrs. Plummer, what advice would you give a person today who is called upon to be a Sabbath School superintendent or teacher?

Plummer: There are a number of important areas that must be given attention:

- I would emphasize to anyone interested in or called to these offices that they do not need to possess superior talent. But they do need to develop the talent they have. I would tell them to demonstrate an interest in their calling and prepare for it by studying successful methods of teaching as well as the subject they are presenting.

Remember that God's work was not necessarily done by people who possessed natural abilities. Moses, for example, was slow of speech, passionate, and egotistical. But God's power enabled him to overcome these defects. Peter was a fisherman, uneducated by his world's standards. Yet he preached one sermon that led 3,000 people to Christ. Allow such examples to encourage you to be used by God.

- And equally important, remember that only those Sabbath School leaders and students who hear and follow God's voice can win souls. They must watch for souls because they are to give an account. They must be faithful, determined, and persistent in preparing themselves for the work of each Sabbath day.

Interviewer: Thank you, Mrs. Plummer. Would you please honor us by giving our closing prayer? (*The person playing the role of Mrs. Plummer prays.*)

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