

COOL TOOLS FOR SABBATH SCHOOL

The Sabbath School Superintendent

The Sabbath School was developed to teach the gospel of Jesus Christ in response to the command of Jesus, in the setting of the Three Angels' Messages. In loyalty to this original purpose, the Sabbath School continues to communicate the Good News with the objective to win, hold, and train for Jesus Christ, men, women, youth, and children in all the world.

These objectives are carried forward through the following four areas of emphasis:

Bible Study

This emphasis includes:

- Making the saving gospel of Jesus Christ central in all Sabbath School plans, projects, and programs, ensuring that all activities and materials are Christ-centered, Bible-based, and person-oriented.
- Cultivating the attitude of prayer and devotion on the part of all members.
- Fostering spiritual growth through regular study of God's Word, and sharing the faith with others.

Fellowship

This emphasis includes:

- Fostering Christian fellowship in every aspect of the Sabbath School program throughout the week.
- Working together to develop and implement programs and projects for recruiting new members.
- Enlisting the help of all leaders, teachers, and regular members in helping to restore missing church members and absentee Sabbath School members to regular attendance and active participation in the life of the church.
- Carefully nurturing the spiritual interests of newly-baptized members.

Outreach

This emphasis includes:

- Making every part of the Sabbath School program and class contribute to the Christian experience of each member so that he or she serves as a spiritual magnet to draw others to Christ.
- Making certain that all teaching is soul-winning and soul-holding in nature.
- Being alert to opening providences that present to the Sabbath School or its individual members, opportunities for soul winning.

Mission

This emphasis includes:

- Maintaining a clear and far-reaching vision of the global mission of the church.
- Constantly fostering in children, youth, and adults a desire to serve in gospel promulgation wherever the Lord may lead.
- Teaching and promoting systematic and self-denying stewardship in support of world missions.

The Superintendent's Role

The work of the Sabbath School superintendent can be accomplished only by Holy Spirit's empowerment of the gift of administration. One should no more think of doing this work, without an infilling of the Holy Spirit, than the Children of Israel could march upon Jericho without the ark of God.

Consider this quote: "The Saviour knew that no argument, however logical, would melt hard hearts or break through the crust of worldliness and selfishness. He knew that His disciples must receive the heavenly endowment; that the gospel would be effective only as it was proclaimed by hearts made warm and lips made eloquent by a living knowledge of Him who is the way, the truth, and the life. The work committed to the disciples would require great efficiency; for the tide of evil ran deep and strong against them. A vigilant, determined leader was in command of the forces of darkness, and the followers of Christ could battle for the right only through the help that God, by His Spirit, would give them."¹

It is the responsibility of the superintendent to administer the entire Sabbath School, coordinating the various divisions and ensuring that all are functioning efficiently. The smooth operation of the machinery, however, is only the conduit through which the power of the Holy Spirit is conducted. Spirit-filled leadership will be manifested in a passion for equipping the saints for the task of seeking the lost.

In most Sabbath Schools, the practice is that the superintendent functions as the adult division leader,



but in larger Sabbath Schools another person is appointed to lead the adults, leaving the superintendent free to coordinate all divisions.

He or she should be a member of the church, and of good report among the membership. Those called to act as superintendent of a Sabbath School are called to a sacred work. As the superintendent thinks and feels, so will he or she act. One cannot inspire others with what he or she does not feel, and this peculiar task is to lead others to high endeavor.

As a leader and director, the superintendent should possess executive ability. He or she will have much to do with others, and this will require tact, skill, resourcefulness, patience, and sympathy. The superintendent is the manager of the school, but he or she cannot manage others without first learning the secret of managing self.

A successful superintendent must be persevering and energetic. The duties require hard work and much earnest thought. He or she should be studious and observant, endeavoring daily to add to his or her store of knowledge, particularly in the work for which he or she is responsible.

The superintendent should constantly study how to make the Sabbath School more efficient in reaching its great objective by studying its general organization, its teaching force, its pupils, its order and discipline, and above all, its main objectives. He or she will find much aid in doing this by reading literature on Sabbath School methods and procedures and in counseling with the conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries director.

Assistant Superintendent

This officer should serve, as the title indicates, as an assistant to the superintendent in carrying forward the regular work of the school, and in bearing such responsibilities as may be assigned by the superintendent. He or she should be ready to respond to any request of the superintendent for assistance in the administration of the Sabbath School affairs. In the absence of the superintendent, the assistant takes full charge of the school. The Sabbath School is a training school for workers of all classes. As a result of giving the assistants the proper training and experience, future leading officers will be provided. In the larger Sabbath Schools more than one assistant superintendent may be required.

Assistant Superintendent for Evangelism

One of the assistant superintendents should be designated as Assistant Superintendent for Evangelism. The duties of the Assistant Superintendent for Evangelism shall include the

following:

- Carrying the responsibility of planning and presenting to the Sabbath School Council the plans for organizing Branch Sabbath Schools of various types, Vacation Bible Schools, and related Sabbath School evangelism enterprises within the missionary territory of the church, in cooperation with the evangelistic plans of the local pastor or evangelist.

- Developing and sustaining an interest in Branch Sabbath School evangelism on the part of the whole church.

- Being prepared to present to the main Sabbath School plans and reports of Sabbath School evangelism.

- Keeping the conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries director informed concerning Branch Sabbath School evangelism developments.

Assistant Superintendent for Membership

The Department of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries recommends that in every Sabbath School an intensive, conscientious, and persevering year-round effort be put forth to enroll all church members and their children as regular Sabbath School members.

The assistant superintendent (first assistant where there is more than one assistant) should be designated as the Assistant Superintendent for membership. It is understood that the major part of his or her time will be devoted to the following duties:

- To sponsor full Sabbath School membership, especially concentrating on enrolling all church members and their children, and promoting faithful Sabbath School attendance.

- To be responsible for keeping up-to-date membership records, securing the needed information from the church clerk and Sabbath School secretary, thus determining which members are missing.

- To bring to the Sabbath School Council, with teachers present, a complete list of the names and addresses of missing members, at which time the council will assign each missing member to a class, entering the name and address in the prospective-member section on the class record card.

- To submit to each regular monthly Sabbath School Council meeting up-to-date reports of progress being made in enrolling these prospective members as regular members, and also reporting on regular membership and attendance.

- To cooperate closely with the Sabbath School extension division leader, making sure the leader has all the names of those who, because of circumstances, find it physically impossible to attend Sabbath School regularly. All such should be faithfully enrolled in the

extension division and regularly contacted by the extension division leader.

- To seek to encourage each Sabbath School teacher to lead a prayer and visitation ministry for reclaiming missing members.

The Superintendent's Relation to the Pastor

The cordial relationship that should exist between the pastor of the church and the Sabbath School superintendent is worthy of emphasis, for these two leaders are brought very close together in their work.

Because the Sabbath School embraces the whole church, it follows logically that the pastor of the church is also the pastor of the Sabbath School—not that any attempt is made to discharge the duties of the superintendent, but he or she should exercise a fostering interest in all the activities of the school.

By virtue of the position, the pastor becomes the spiritual advisor and educational leader of the Sabbath School, and as such is concerned for the character of the teaching in the Sabbath School. Thus the pastor is responsible in a large measure for the proper training of teachers, employing his or her good offices to see that it is done properly. Everything that contributes to the efficiency of the teaching force, such as the several Sabbath School teachers' training courses and the weekly teachers' meeting, should receive the pastor's sympathetic support.

The superintendent should seek for a mutually cooperative relationship with the pastor.

The Relation of the Superintendent to Co-workers

Frequently a superintendent makes a mistake in trying to do too much of the work personally. The counsel of Jethro to Moses should be heeded: "The thing that you do is not good. Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself" (Exod. 18:17, 18 NKJV). He should, instead, study the fine art of helping others become involved in ministries according to their spiritual gifts. His success as a superintendent lies more in employing others to do important parts of the work than in trying to carry most of the load himself.

No superintendent should attempt to carry the responsibilities of the office without calling regular meetings of the Sabbath School Council, at least once each month.

The Superintendent's Relation to the Sabbath School Council

The first responsibility of the superintendent should become acquainted thoroughly with the current plans

and policies of the General Conference Department of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries by becoming familiar with the latest available Sabbath School Manual and other literature and by giving attention to the instruction sent by his local conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries director.

Then, as soon as possible after the election of the officers, the superintendent should call them together in Sabbath School Council session. The Council consists of the superintendent, assistant superintendents, secretary, assistant secretaries, division leaders, Investment secretary, Vacation Bible School director, and an elder.

The overall responsibilities of the pastor or district leader in the church program require that he or she take an active and personal interest in the various activities carried on by the church, serving as a close counselor to the committees of all auxiliary organizations.

The superintendent is the chair of the Sabbath School Council. As chair, he or she should prepare an agenda for each meeting, leaving room also for items from the other officers. Everything that has a bearing on the Sabbath School is proper subject matter for consideration in the Sabbath School Council.

Selection of Teachers

One of the first responsibilities of the Sabbath School Council is the selection of teachers for every division of the Sabbath School, unless they are chosen by the church board, nominating committee, or gifts placement team. Before teachers are chosen, the counsel given on the election of teachers found in *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, pages 89-126, should be carefully considered. Teachers for the children's divisions should have special consideration in an endeavor to secure the best possible talent adapted to the various age levels. Some conferences also require forms to be filled out by the leader, protecting children from potential abuse.

The soul-winning program of the Sabbath School will be a major item for early consideration by the Council. Branch Sabbath Schools and Vacation Bible Schools should be planned in counsel with the assistant superintendent for evangelism. For further information on organizing and conducting Branch Sabbath Schools, consult the leaflet on *Branch Sabbath School Evangelism*.

Plans for Decision Days will need careful study and organization. In this connection, study the leaflet *Personal Evangelism and Decision Days*.

Other special occasions, such as Thirteenth Sabbath programs, Community Guest Days, Investment programs, etc., will need careful planning.

The Superintendent's Relation to the Program

Of the varied relationships the superintendent sustains to the Sabbath School, that pertaining to the program is most vital. Standing by itself, the program is lifeless, powerless, meaningless, but coupled with the personality of a superintendent who is full of life, energy, and enthusiasm, and who possesses a true vision of the purpose of the school, it at once becomes a vehicle of tremendous power.

The Program for the Adult Division

Flexibility is recommended in the format of the adult division Sabbath School program. In order that the Sabbath School's central objective may be promoted, however, every feature of its weekly program should contribute to one or more of the four emphases: fellowship, outreach, Bible study, and mission.

Sabbath School time should give top priority to these four emphases. This may be addressed in a number of ways. One of the most effective ways to accomplish the heart of Sabbath School objectives is through small-group Sabbath School classes. If adequate time is allowed for class time (1 to 1 ½ hours), fellowship and prayer are naturally followed by life-related discussion of the Bible. Then the class can focus on reaching missing members and outreach projects (see *Sabbath School Action Units* leaflet). A number of successful Sabbath Schools begin with class time. This is then followed by Sabbath School corporate time for music, mission emphasis, fellowship, and sharing of outreach experiences. Children can often join for corporate time, sharing songs and watching mission DVD/videos, and giving mission offerings. This leads to the worship service.

Other Sabbath schools require a more traditional format. The following Sabbath School program schedules are suggested as a framework upon which superintendents and their Councils may develop program formats according to the general objectives of Sabbath School.

Program Plan No. 1

9:15- 9:30 Song Service
9:30- 9:34 Opening Prayer and Superintendent's Remarks
9:34- 9:42 Keeping on Course
 a. Progress Report, or
 b. Evangelism, or
 c. Investment, or
 d. Birthday-Thank Offering, or
 e. Improvement, or
 f. Occasional Special Feature
9:42- 9:46 Musical Selection

9:46- 9:56 World Mission Emphasis
9:56-10:36 Class Activities
 Mission and Expense Offering, Class Records, and Evangelism—10 minutes.
 Lesson Discussion—30 minutes
10:36-10:40 Program Preview for Next Week and Closing

Note: The above program schedule is suitable for a church, whether it has separate adult classrooms or not. Where there are separate classrooms and extra time is needed to reach them, add the final three minutes to the class period, dismissing from the individual classes.

Program Plan No. 2

9:15- 9:30 Service of Praise and Meditation
9:30- 9:34 Opening Prayer and Superintendent's Remarks
9:34- 9:40 Keeping on Course (Items a through e in Plan No. 1)
9:40- 9:50 World Mission Emphasis
9:50-10:30 Class Activities (As in Plan No. 1)
10:30-10:40 Special Feature and Closing
Note: Program Plan No. 2 can be used in large or small churches that do not have separate adult classrooms.

Program Plan No. 3

9:15- 9:30 Song Service
9:30- 9:34 Opening Prayer and Superintendent's Remarks
9:34- 9:44 World Mission Emphasis
9:44-10:24 Class Activities (As in Plan No. 1)
10:24-10:28 Musical Selection
10:28-10:36 Keeping on Course (Items a through f in Plan No. 1)
10:36-10:40 Program Preview and Closing
The superintendent, to a very large degree, is the molding, guiding spirit of the school. If he or she is a consecrated, energetic, cheerful, orderly leader, the school will be quick to reflect that spirit.

Program Plan No. 4*

9:15- 9:30 Song Service - Fellowship
9:30- 9:38 Welcome, Hymn, Prayer
9:38- 9:45 World Outreach Emphasis
9:45- 9:48 Focus on Giving
9:48- 9:54 Personal Ministries Emphasis
9:54-10:30 Sabbath School Lesson (Fellowship, Ministries Groups)
10:30-10:40 Organized Outreach Groups

Plan Your Work—Work Your Plan

The general planning for conducting the school

must be done in advance. The successful school, be it large or small, must have a plan for each Sabbath day. In the adult division, where practical, the members should assemble in class formation. This will avoid the necessity of breaking up the school and forming classes after the school has begun. All leaders and teachers should be present at least 15 minutes before the opening. The first 15 minutes gives the mold, the spirit, the impulse, to the entire service. The opening exercises should kindle the fires of enthusiasm, awaken the intellect, arouse the conscience, and bring to every soul a keen sense of the presence of the Spirit of God.

The Opening Prayer

“When you pray, be brief, come right to the point. Do not preach the Lord a sermon in your long prayers. . . . They embrace a whole round of subjects that have no reference to the necessities of the occasion or the wants of the people. Such prayers are suitable for the closet, but should not be offered in public. The hearers become weary and long for the minister to close.”² “One or two minutes is long enough for any ordinary prayer.”³

Many new members form their ideas of the meaning of prayer, its spirit, its power, its efficacy, by hearing public prayers. The close individual relation of God to His people is made known to all who may hear the fervent prayer of a heart that truly communes with his Maker. In no way can the reality of Christianity be better taught in a public way than by the prayers of Christians.

We should pray that each officer and teacher may have special help for his or her responsibilities. The needy mission fields will call for our increased liberality and self-denial. We should pray for the missing members, for the isolated, and for those recently joining the school. We should especially pray for the younger members of the school and those who are to instruct them. We should not forget to pray for all our schools scattered over the world, and for the fields to which our offerings will go.

Special requests for prayer may be presented. A sick pupil or teacher, a departing missionary, any work of love which may be contemplated, may be the occasion for a special prayer. The one offering the prayer should face the congregation and pray in an audible voice that can be heard in all parts of the room.

Care must be taken that the true spirit of reverence be cultivated during the prayer. A kneeling posture is the most appropriate attitude of prayer. Give the school time to become quiet before the prayer begins.

Keeping on Course

Several of the suggested programs include a section called “Keeping on Course.” This feature may include the secretary’s progress report or a presentation on evangelism, Investment, the birthday thank offering, or improvement. It is suggested that emphasis on evangelism, Investment, birthday-thank offering, and improvement be given on the assigned Sabbaths. Suggested material is given in *LEAD* magazine for each week. The Sabbath School that is seeking to win souls by conducting Branch Sabbath Schools, Vacation Bible Schools, and other means of witness will find a variety of local items that will be of interest to all.

Musical Selection

The time provided for musical selection on the program gives opportunity for any special music that may be arranged. Class singing, division singing, and specially prepared songs fit in nicely at this point on the program. Constant care must be exercised that all songs shall be free from doctrinal errors, shall be spiritual in sentiment, and that the influence shall not be merely entertaining. Many a heart unmoved by a sermon has surrendered to the Savior under the influence of music. The music of a Sabbath School should be under the management of a wise leader, one who understands how to make its influence wholly positive.

Select hymns that are expressive of praise, rejoicing, full of inspiration, hymns that awaken the true spirit of worship and bring sunshine into the room and heart. Hymns expressive of missionary activity are appropriate in Sabbath School.

Encourage everyone in the school to take part in the singing. Singing is one form of worship, and it should be the pleasure of everyone present to have a part in it.

The World Mission Report

As a means of deepening the missionary spirit in the hearts of old and young, the world missions exercise takes an important place in the Sabbath School program. *The Mission*, a quarterly magazine, is supplied free of charge to the schools, and sets forth calls from the various fields benefiting from the Thirteenth Sabbath Special Projects Offering each quarter. The time and place in the weekly service for this feature is outlined in the suggested programs.

The one chosen to conduct this exercise should have at least a week’s time to prepare. If he or she becomes acquainted with the reading so the information can be told, not read, it will have a much better effect. A wall map of the mission field under

consideration is a valuable aid. There are also quarterly mission magazines specifically for children and teens.

Teachers Coordinate Other Class Activities

The teacher (unless others are appointed) is responsible not only for teaching but also for marking the records.

There should be an appointed time and uniform plan for marking the class records and taking up the class offerings. In most divisions the best time for this is immediately preceding the class lesson study. The responsibility for this work rests directly upon the teacher, but the superintendents should give such instruction to the teachers, collectively or individually, as will ensure the record of each class being made out accurately and quickly.

Safeguarding the Bible Study Time

In attaining the true object of Sabbath School work, the teacher, or class facilitator, is the most vital factor. The superintendent should see to it that those taking part on the program confine their parts to the time allotted, so as to ensure a full 30 to 50 minutes for the lesson study. Additional time should be allotted for classes that focus on outreach. It is recommended that teachers introduce the lesson by a brief tie-in with the previous week's lesson.

A two-minute signal should be given that the lesson period is about to close. The faithful teacher has carefully planned an effective ending of the lesson study.

Outreach Ministries

The most effective way to carry on soul-winning evangelism is for each class to visit and pray for missing members and to have a class project for reaching the lost. In Sabbath School Action Unit classes, the care coordinator keeps the class on target for achieving their class goals and accomplishing their outreach mission. The personal ministries leader works with care coordinators to coordinate the corporate outreach thrust of the church. (See the *Sabbath School Action Unit* leaflet.)

In churches where Action Unit Sabbath School classes have not yet been established, it is recommended that a ten-minute personal ministries service be conducted between Sabbath School and the divine service. In churches where this service immediately follows the Sabbath School, and in order to facilitate the transition from Sabbath School to the ten-minute church missionary service, it is recommended that the Sabbath School not be dismissed, but that just prior to the close of the lesson

period both the Sabbath School superintendent and the church missionary leader proceed to the platform.

The superintendent shall terminate the lesson recitation at the close of the 70-minute Sabbath School session by some appropriate signal, whereupon the church missionary leader without announcement shall immediately take charge of the ten-minute missionary service, the superintendent remaining seated on the platform during the missionary service. At the close of the ten-minute missionary period the congregation shall be dismissed with a benediction. This recommendation does not infringe on the 70 minutes devoted to the Sabbath School program.

In Action Unit Sabbath Schools it is well to spend corporate time on a regular basis sharing outreach visions, goals, and experiences from the classes.

Thinking It Over

When the superintendent is free after the Sabbath services, he or she would do well to sit down and take a quiet mental survey of the Sabbath School for that day. He or she should review the plans for the school, noting the success of each and scanning the possible reason for any failure. The superintendent should seek privately the counsel and criticism of trusted friends and be willing to take counsel, but not to be persuaded to try out novel plans and methods against good judgment.

Sabbath School Membership

Recognizing a duty to one's utmost to bring every believer in touch with the Sabbath School, the faithful superintendent, in cooperation with the assistant superintendent for membership, will study this problem carefully and endeavor to extend the influence of the school until it reaches every person who might reasonably be expected to attend.

Study the church records. Make a list of the church members who are non-attendants of the school. Every superintendent is responsible to see that the card file checkup system is put into operation in the Sabbath School. For a description of this system, see the next section.

When the list is as complete as it can be made, seek to discover the reasons for non-attendance in each individual case. Take this information to the Sabbath School Council and devise effective methods of reaching the absentees, such as postal and personal invitations. Enlist the help of members of the school who may be close friends of the non-attendants. Arrange an especially attractive program and make this the basis for a plea for the one Sabbath. Greet cordially those who come, but not so effusively as to

cause them embarrassment. Give them a good teacher. Invite them to come regularly.

Build up the extension division of your school by enrolling in it those who cannot accept the invitation to attend the regular sessions of the school, but who are willing to study the lessons at home and report as extension division members. Sustained efforts of this kind can result in strengthening the school and extending its influence. Continue the search for the missing ones until everyone who can be expected to attend the school is doing so. "Every Believer a Member of the Sabbath School" should be the motto.

Sabbath School Records

It would be well for each Sabbath School to keep records of members, potential members, and children who are maturing toward baptism. This information should be shared with classes and children's leaders for the purpose of prayer and ministry.

Starting Time Varies

The time for Sabbath School to begin varies according to culture. In some countries transportation and domestic responsibilities influence a late start time. In most of these cultures, however, the event is more important than the start time. In other cultures where the clock has more authority it is essential to solicit cooperation with all to begin on a specified time. Sabbath School members should agree upon a time to begin and strive to be present at that hour. People have a tendency to be prompt for appointments that they consider significant. A life-related study of the lesson involving member participation often motivates members to be present on time.

The Sabbath School should agree upon a format that is most meaningful for them. In beginning a reform in this matter, see that the hour for opening the school is well understood and acceptable to all. Then, with unflinching regularity, open the school on time, regardless of the number present. To wait for tardy members is a sure way of educating people to be tardy. It does little good, however, to scold. Often it is only the punctual ones who hear the strong admonition to be on time.

Daily Study of the Sabbath School Lesson

Motivation to study the Bible is a primary concern for superintendents and teachers. Adults are motivated by content that is relevant, meaningful, and meets their current needs. Adults have a need to participate in the discussion. For these reasons, a life-related discussion of the lesson may be one of the strongest motivators for study. Class members desire

to have Bible information to contribute to a discussion if the press of the class is in that direction.

Members will find greater purpose for study if they are sharing their beliefs. If the class is conducted in such a manner to welcome seekers (see leaflet *Community Friendly Sabbath Schools*), members will be eager to share meaningful thoughts with others.

It is essential to understand reasons that members do not study the Bible. For example, in many rural areas of the world, adults might not be able to read or may read in another language. In that case, it would be well to arrange for some other means of study. For example children might read to their parents or audio tapes might be used.

The need for daily feeding upon the Word of God is set forth in a most emphatic way in the Scriptures and by the Spirit of Prophecy. No great degree of spirituality is possible in the life of anyone without daily communion with God.

The Department of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries does not advise the inquisitorial method of asking members whether they have studied the lesson every day. Instead, it is recommended that a survey be taken in the class, asking all who are following the daily lesson study plan to raise the hand. A notation of this number is made at the bottom of the class record card each week.

Mission Offerings

The development of the missionary spirit is the very natural outgrowth of effective Sabbath School work. What is Bible study worth to any school if the members do not understand that what they receive they must pass on to others who have it not? Our schools need the blessed inspiration of a real burden for souls in mission fields.

The standard for giving is "as God has prospered." The General Conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department recommends 2 to 3 percent of income. This includes weekly offerings, birthday thank, and 13th Sabbath offerings.

Proper devices, goal charts, and such may help to keep the projects before the people.

Birthday Thank Offerings

Thousands of dollars are given each quarter as Birthday Thank Offerings to missions. Notice the term for this offering: the Birthday-Thank Offering. We give a gratitude offering in recognition of God's blessings for another year of life. But sometimes there are other occasions for special thanksgiving that one desires to acknowledge by a special gift to the Lord—preservation of life in an accident, recovery from a severe illness, the

conversion of a soul for whom one has been laboring, or other blessings. All money coming into this fund is counted on the quarterly goal and the per capita giving.

The Birthday Thank Offering should never substitute for regular Sabbath School contribution, but should be an additional gift.

The Investment Fund

The Sabbath School Investment plan has been a fruitful source of mission money for generations. Many conferences are recommending definite Investment goals for their Sabbath Schools. Very early in the year, every Sabbath School Council should lay plans for effective Investment participation. An enthusiastic person should be appointed as Investment secretary. For a fuller discussion of the Investment plan see Sabbath School Manual.

Providing Sabbath School Supplies

Some satisfactory plan should be in operation in every Sabbath School for the purchase of supplies. Expense offerings should be collected in an inconspicuous way. By an occasional report of the financial condition of the expense fund, sufficient stimulus is given to provide required supplies. Some churches incorporate Sabbath School expenses in their annual church expense budget. This plan works very effectively.

Teachers' Meetings

The superintendent should arrange for and lead a weekly teachers' meeting. If thought best, someone else may be appointed to lead the lesson study.

The ideal time for the teachers' meeting is a midweek service. This allows opportunity for lesson study before the meeting, and afterward each teacher has a chance to make incorporate the information into the lesson plan.

Officers, teachers, and supply teachers should attend. It may take some personal work to secure a full, regular attendance, but if the meetings are as interesting and helpful as they may be made, all will willingly attend. Teachers of all divisions may properly meet together during that part of the meeting devoted to the discussion of the general interests of the school. They may then separate into appropriate groups for the study of the lesson and the consideration of ways of teaching it in the various divisions.

The first object to be attained is cooperation in seeking God and in working together. We have not been half earnest enough in seeking the wisdom and power that God alone can give. Teachers should pray

with and for one another. Then, too, the privacy of the occasion and the mutual interest that exists make it proper to speak of individual cases and make them subjects of special prayer. If any members of the school are discouraged, or in trouble, there is power in the prayers of the teachers to aid them in the fight of faith.

Reforms and improvements of all kinds may be brought about more quickly and easily through the medium of the teachers' meeting than in any other way. The teachers' meeting creates sentiment, molds opinion, and arouses active effort along right lines.

The idea obtains in some minds that teachers' meetings are held merely for the purpose of studying the lesson. The object should be to gain new ideas of the subject matter and methods of teaching. The questions asked should be of a nature to draw from the teachers the ideas they have acquired by their own preparation, that all may benefit.

Questions like these may frequently be asked: How had you thought of beginning the lesson? How can you best impress this or that particular thought? What comparisons had you thought of making? What illustrations might be used? Are you intending to use any maps, objects, or pictures? What practical thought do you consider especially applicable to your class? How will you impress that thought? Such questions stimulate activity and originality of thought, and the helpful influence of such discussion cannot be measured.

Training Courses for Teachers

Sabbath School teachers now have the opportunity to take courses of training calculated to raise the standard of their teaching, whether they teach in adults' or children's divisions.

The superintendent is responsible for the standard of teaching in Sabbath School. He or she should work with the Sabbath School Council in arranging for teacher-training courses to be conducted in the school. If conference help is not available for conducting the course, the pastor or some other well-qualified person may do it.

A number of teacher training courses are available from the Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department in local conferences. *Lead* magazine has published Class Facilitator Certification manuals for several years. The following courses have been available in the past and have proven useful:

Training Course No. 1: "Performance in Sabbath School Teaching" is a training package for youth and adult Sabbath School teachers. It consists of five lessons on slides and tape cassettes (length of each lesson is about 10 minutes), a teacher's guide book,

and a viewing guide. The audio-visuals are intended to be used as discussion starters with the whole course lasting for five hours. It is especially prepared for a weekend seminar, but it could be extended over a longer time. Inquire about the course from your local conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries Department.

Training Course No. 2: is a short course for adult and youth teachers, consisting of four lessons, each of one hour and a half, with some valuable supplementary material which may be either read privately by the pupil or used by the teacher for a fifth instruction class. There is also a treatise for complementary reading after the course is finished.

The textbook for this course is *Handbook for Sabbath School Teachers* (revised 1982) by Harry W. Lowe. This course is in non-technical language and is arranged so that busy teachers may complete it in one weekend, or in four or five evenings. The lessons are reviewed orally by the whole class, so no examination papers have to be answered.

This course is also available on tape from your conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries director.

Training Course No. 3: "How to teach Children in Sabbath School" is a course of instruction for leaders and teachers of children up to and including primary level. Written in lay language, it addresses the needs of the child at each stage of development and answers such questions as, "How can the teacher teach to meet those needs?" "What are the most effective teaching methods and tools?" "How can a teacher effectively lead a Sabbath School child to Christ?"

Miscellaneous Suggestions

Visitors Made Welcome. Courteous attention should be given to visitors. In every school it should be the duty of one of the officers or of the hospitality committee to greet and note the arrival of visitors. Meet them when they enter the room, invite them to seats in a class where they will most likely be interested, and provide them with songbooks.

A teacher should make visitors welcome, provide them with *Bible Study Guides* and Bibles, and in a tactful way solicit their participation in the study. This should not go beyond what is agreeable to visitors. Make them feel at home, free from embarrassment, and cordially welcome. Introduce them to other members of the school as may be convenient, and heartily invite them to come again. In the house of God no one need wait for the formality of an introduction before greeting visitors, and none should be passed by indifferently. (See the Sabbath School leaflets on "Community Friendly Sabbath

Schools" and "Sabbath School Welcoming and Ushering.")

Supplies. Study the supplies needed by each division, being careful not to overlook the extra requirements of the younger members and visitors. Each division should have a budget to provide teaching aids in addition to the regular resources.

Ushers. In addition to the workers already mentioned, every Sabbath School should have ushers to meet visitors and members and escort the visitors to proper classes as well as look after the general comfort of the school. Latecomers should be discouraged gently from entering in the midst of some special feature, as prayer, special song, or the secretary's report. (See leaflet "Sabbath School Welcoming and Ushering.")

Decorations. The fresh, inspiring joy of flowers blends with the Sabbath School idea. A flower committee may be responsible for providing and arranging the flowers. On behalf of the Sabbath School always thank those who bring the flowers.

Staying Informed. The superintendent should be responsive to all communications from the conference Sabbath School and Personal Ministries director. Sometimes instruction is passed by unheeded, which, if accepted, would bring great blessing to the school.

Impromptu Speeches. Gifted public speaker sense the value of carefully thinking out beforehand the exact words and phrases of talks, even to writing them. A superintendent who follows this practice for all presentations—even for routine speech—is prudent. An unprepared speech is usually too long, disjointed, awkwardly closed, and proportionately ineffective.

It is unnecessary for a superintendent to make frequent speeches, either long or short. A wise superintendent will be seen but not heard too much.

Quarterly Reports. Take an interest in the quarterly report, which represents your school in the records of the local conference, union conference, division, and General Conference Department of Sabbath School and Personal Ministries. See that your report is complete, every question answered, every item correct, and the report mailed on time. Some conferences use a very general report counting those in attendance.

Familiarity With Sabbath School Literature. Superintendents should be careful students of all Sabbath School literature. They should study carefully the latest edition of the *Sabbath School Manual* and the divine blueprint for the Sabbath School: *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*. They should be regular readers of *LEAD* magazine.

They should also familiarize themselves with the

other leaflets in the Sabbath School Leaflet Series. Sabbath Schools presided over by superintendents who are availing themselves of all these helps will not be in a rut, but will be progressive and up-to-date in every way.

Special Days. Some Sabbath Schools have been blessed by emphasizing special days to be observed in the interests of the Sabbath School. Some of these require special programs, such as the thirteenth Sabbath of each quarter, Investment Day, Community Guest Day, conventions, and Decision Day services.

Take care lest any special service take the place of Sabbath School. The Sabbath School session should first be held, with a certain special flavor added. On unusual occasions the secretary's report and some other features may be omitted, but never should the time for class lesson study be less than thirty minutes.

Ten Questions for Superintendents

1. Do I show immediate and warm interest in the problems brought to me by the members of my school?
2. Do I try to find the strong points of every worker and urge him or her to find something of value in each pupil?
3. Do I stimulate workers to learn to solve their own problems and at the same time make them feel free to come to me?
4. Do I irritate everyone with regulations designed

to control only a few offenders?

5. Do I refrain from the use of sarcasm, discourteous remarks, or offensive humor in dealing with others?

6. Do I avoid discouraging the suggestions of others with such comments as, "We've always done it this way"?

7. Do I make needed decisions tactfully and fairly, but promptly?

8. Am I conscientious about keeping promises made to an individual, my fellow workers, or to the school?

9. Realizing that conditions change, do I readily accept necessary changes in methods and regulations?

10. Am I careful to set the right example by my habits, practices, conduct and behavior?

"The object of the Sabbath school should not be lost sight of in mechanical arrangements, thus occupying time which should be given to other important matters. We should ever be guarded against forms and ceremonies which will eclipse the real object for which we are laboring. There is danger of carrying system to such an extreme that the Sabbath school will become weariness, when, on the contrary, it should be a rest, a refreshment, and a blessing."⁴

1. *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 31.
2. *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 201.
3. *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 581.
4. *Counsels on Sabbath School Work*, p. 151.

